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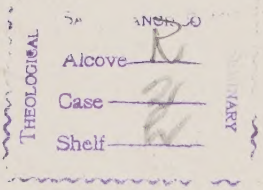

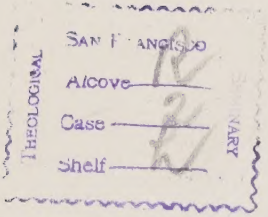
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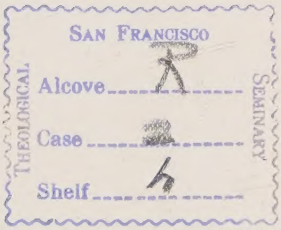
A TALE OF KOREA

BY

W. ARTHUR NOBLE



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PREFACE.

THE aim of this book is to represent Korean affairs from the standpoint of the Korean.

The writer has endeavored to look through Korean eyes at the acts of foreigners, in their attitude toward Korea, and search for their interpretation from the Korean standpoint; to illustrate the customs of the people and their habits of thought; to show that the Asiatic loves, hates, fears, hopes and sacrifices for his ideals, the same as does his Western brother; to show the great struggle of new Korea for a better life; to illustrate the type of manhood that is leading the people toward reform; to awaken sympathy for a people who have become the victims of an unjust exploitation by a foreign power.

The characters and incidents here related are historical. Where it has been necessary to enlarge upon them, the traditions and spirit of the people have been faithfully followed. For obvious reasons names of persons still living and names of some places connected with them have been changed.

Whether the writer has succeeded in his purposes or not, is left to the judgment of the kindly sympathetic reader.

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CHAPTER I

The Royal Recorder

I would not be true to that which the Korean holds dearest in life, namely, the reverence due his ancestors, if I did not, in these first lines, introduce the reader to my father, the Royal Recorder, who was the head of the great Kim clan of the North, and also, to the home over which he ruled.

At a distance, the Sung-ji[1] mansion resembled a fortification. A wall enclosing a small village of roofs formed a rectangle of nearly three thousand square yards. It was eight feet high, covered with huge tile coping, but here the resemblance to a fortification ceased. Above the wall, within the enclosure, rose the buildings of our home. They were, like the wall, rectangular in shape, with broad gables and massive roofs resembling the hills that towered above them. The eaves of the roofs, from center to corners, sloped up and outward, giving the group of buildings an airiness, like a dancing girl with her arms raised aloft posed for the dance. The suggestion of humor was enhanced by the arrangement of the buildings. They stood at all angles, as if they had paused in the midst of a mad frolic and

[1]Royal Recorder.

were peering over the walls at a noisy, chattering brook that half encircled the outside of the enclosure. The great compound was flanked at the back by a high range of hills called "The Mistress of the Tong River." It rose sharply out of the narrow valley and turned southward by the side of the river with long graceful strides, swinging from its evergreen sides a voluminous trail, which, folding out and in, revealed a village here and hid another there. Days, when the winds blew heavily from the south and hurtled up through the mountain peaks, there was heard a sobbing and moaning sound, so that, it was said, demons of the mountains were struggling and shouting in the storm.

The main entrance to the enclosure was a huge gate over which, supported by four posts, was an upper structure sheltering a room that opened on four sides, where, in the time of our prosperity, hung a ponderous drum and other instruments of music. Here the curfew was played, and not rung, as is the habit in some lands.

The curfew at my home was an imitation of the cunning fiction practiced at the country magistracies, which regarded the unwalled towns as possessing gates to be closed and opened, at regulated times, for the protection of the people. Thus, at night, the people would be called from their toil, and again, in the unreasonable hours of the early cock-crowing, the drums and horns would roar out,

announcing to the sleepy denizens that the gates to the town, of which there were none, were open and the people permitted to engage in their daily toil.

Just inside the main gate stood a small building which inspired my boyhood with awe, exceeded only by the fear that I held for the ghosts and hobgoblins who were hidden in the top of the Mistress of the Tong River. This was the guest house where my father received governors, magistrates, and other high officials who were ready to make long journeys to our country home to solicit favor of the man who stood in the Imperial Presence when at the capital. The building boasted of two rooms separated by an unusually heavy partition, behind which, it was understood, the great Sung-ji on rare occasions imparted his whispered confidences.

The floor of the main room, covered with oiled paper, was polished daily by a slave girl till it shone like a mirror. As a boy, in the absence of the usual awe-inspiring dignity, I often gamboled on its slippery surface and measured the room, six strides one way and four the other. The furniture of the larger room, where guests were received, consisted of a large brass candlestick that reached from the floor as high as one's head; the brasier, usually filled with coals for the convenience of the long pipes of guests, and cushions, arranged in order about the room, giving it a sense of luxury. The wall was papered white and decorated with many impossible

figures by a skilled artist from the capital, and banners hung from the walls covered with quotations from the classics. The room was warmed by flues passing under the house from a fireplace sheltered at one side, where, often as a boy, I fed into its ravenous maw the pine bough cut from the mountainside and laughed as I dodged the flame that licked out hungrily at me.

As I remember my father last, his hair was as white as snow. It was held in place by a band fastened with punctilious neatness about his head, after the style of all our people. Over the band was drawn a skull cap that opened at the top and expanded with projections at the four sides, bearing a decided resemblance to a crown. His face was round, eyes black, with overhanging brows, mouth slightly drooped at the corners and closed firmly, as if he were in the habit of commanding. I best remember him seated on a large cushion in the guest room on the side farthest from the door. At his back, running from wall to wall, a silk screen adorned with beautiful needle-work representing forests, birds, and animals. He usually wore a silk coat dyed red, over a suit of purest white. To me, his voice was always kind, and peering back through the troublous years filled with painful incidents which I am about to relate, I see my father. His benign face and gentle look caress me still, and make the sheet of paper under my hand grow dim.

When in the capital my father's business was to watch the Emperor and write down all his Majesty's acts, however trivial. It was frequently the case that a close intimacy would spring up between the Emperor and his creature, the Sung-ji, that was denied all other officials, and my father, it was said, often jogged his Majesty's elbow to the advantage of many of his friends, and sometimes to the confusion of his enemies, till he was known as "His Majesty's Friend."

At the period of which I write the fortune of the great Sung-ji had been fast fading away, and many were the schemes devised by which it was hoped that our family would become thoroughly reëstablished before he should close his career among the great of earth. Haste in the matter seemed necessary, as that ruthless arbiter, Time, was making sad havoc of this stately patrician of Korean society.

He had held the enviable rank of Sung-ji in the Emperor's service for twenty years, an office denied the North country for a period of more than three hundred years. A powerful family by the name of Song gained control over Korean politics somewhere about 1560, and so successfully connived for its own interests as to secure the passage of a law disqualifying any man living in the northern provinces from securing that rank.

"How," they asked, "is it possible for any good to come out of the North?"

For centuries the question itself sufficed to settle all cavil. Excellency in scholarship was not decided from the merits of the thesis written at the national examinations, but from the locality in which the man lived. When a man was presented for preferment his ancestry was carefully reviewed, and if it was found that the candidate had been so culpable as to have allowed his family to take root in the North country, even though it were a thousand years previous to his own birth, he was quietly turned down, unless, indeed, he had vast sums of money to pay for his rank, and even then he was treated in a spirit of tolerance, but not of fellowship.

The spirit of resentment and jealousy in the North which grew through these years at some periods threatened the country with a revolution; but when my father secured the rank of Sung-ji it was believed to be a death blow to the old regime, and the whole North rejoiced; while in the South, the innovation was viewed with dismay. The most astonished man among Korea's millions was my father himself. He regarded his good fortune as the gift of the gods which augured well for his descendants through all time.

It came about in this way: my grandfather had inherited a large fortune and by shrewd industry had added to it until he was one of the wealthiest landholders in the country. Success seemed to crown his every effort till, it was said, when he

launched a chip on the river it floated back to him acres of lumber. Finally he began to yearn and struggle for national rank. It is fair to him to say that his ambition was more in behalf of his posterity than for himself, with the hopes, however, that a clan of great men would sacrifice at his grave through the centuries to come.

His passion for rank and political preferment burned into his life with an intensity only equaled by the passion of a gambler. He made trips to the capital, spending vast sums of money to curry favor with the powers that controlled these national gifts.

Finally he collected all he had, besides the lands around his immediate home, and left for Seoul, resolved that he would not return until he had secured the position he coveted.

While at the capital, in this desperate search for rank, he met Prince An, who, in the whirl of fortune's wheel, became in after years the Prince Regent of Korea. At this date, however, he was very poor and without great influence. My grandfather deposited with him a large sum of money and received in return the usual empty promises.

Prince An had a son for whom my grandfather took a great fancy and spent whole days in making kites for him and in teaching the boy how to fly them. As he spent much of his time at the home of the Prince, the lad and he were great companions. My grandfather was, it has been stoutly argued,

quite unconscious of any possibility that the boy would ever be any other than a playmate to him, but, as he was a great connoisseur of national rank and royal genealogy, he may have possessed knowledge of some facts that gave course to his kites and length to their strings.

Finally the Emperor died, and having left no children, the country was searched for an heir to the throne. Musty records were produced; claimants in great numbers came forward, but were rejected. At last it was proven beyond a doubt that the son of Prince An was the legitimate heir to the throne.

In the meantime my grandfather had returned to his home a discouraged man. He had struggled against constant defeat and had fretted his life threadbare. He went away vigorous and in the prime of manhood, but returned an old man.

As soon as the new King took his throne he remembered his old playmate and dispatched a courier to call him to Seoul as the one whom the King would delight to honor. The messenger found the home in mourning and the oldest son, my father, hastened to the capital to bear the tidings of his father's death to the boy King. On arriving he was received with many marks of regard and honored with the rank of Sung-ji.

His appointment to this rank and its privileges stirred the whole country, and so earnestly and effectually did the officials at the capital protest that

there has not been a repetition of the appointment to this day.

In this country, newly married people do not separate from the original stock, but each new family gathers under the parental roof, and the original household grows small only by dying off at t e top, so that, in the palmy days of my father's prosperity, more than fifty persons comprised our home, besides a large number of servants quartered in the village outside of the compound.

I, being the youngest son, enjoyed the advantages which are the usual privileges of that member of a family. Idleness and incapacity, the ideals for children of the rich and those of rank, became my lot. Discouraged from taking robust physical exercise, I developed the physical effeminacy which is supposed to be the mark of a gentleman. Keeping the creases out of my silk coat, my hands white and my little finger nails long were the burdensome occupations of my life, until about five years previous to the period of which this story relates I became greatly attached to a young man by the name of Kim Tong-siki,[1] seven years my senior, who, it seems to me, was the most remarkable man of these disturbed times.

My home was composed differently from what critics of the late reform movements would call ideal

[1] "Kim," is the clan name and "Tong-siki" is the name received from his parents on reaching his majority. In this case and in others of which this story relates the clan name will be dropped.

or intolerable. I was not the son of my father's real wife. If at this time I had been called upon to debate the question of the proposed marriage reforms, I would have asked first for their motives: national economics, improvement of society, utilitarian, or ideal? In any case, it would be a reflection on our honored ancestry and might raise the question of my right to existence. Though I am the son of a concubine, I am glad that I am here. My philosophy may be selfish, and I might wish, for the sake of a beautiful creed, that such as I had not been. The sages have taught us, and there are many of us who believe their teaching true, that there will be a time when we all shall have been absorbed in the mother of all life. In such a scheme to argue out of existence one's personality, it might be as consistent to regret the past as to hope for the future. I fancy, however, that Nirvana, into which Buddhism says we are drifting, and asks us to be glad at the perfection of this system of annihilation, would be less attractive if it was not distant and inevitable. One fact is certain—I am here, and when I am hungry I would rather have a homely meal than listen to a fine discourse on the palace bill of fare.

An older brother and I were the only living sons of the great Sung-ji. That fact was the source of much sorrow on the part of my father. Daughters crowded the compound and fluttered about the rambling old homestead in such numbers that he was as

WOMEN AT SUNG-YO'S HOME

little able to keep track of them as was his desire to do so. Thirteen lived to weep under the hard hands of mothers-in-law.

"Sons are a blessing, and daughters are a curse," he would say, yet dimpled cheeks and laughing eyes followed him everywhere. A smile from him would set the hills to echoing with merry laughter. The fact that girls are not supposed to be worth the possession of names frequently produces interesting scenes.

"Which one are you?" the Sung-ji would ask, pinching a pair of pink cheeks.

"Rat," would be the reply.

"Yes, yes," he would say, "what are the rest doing?"

"Pig, Cat and Rascal are playing with Twelve and Thirteen and —"

"Yes, yes, never mind, off with you to your play," would be his reply.

Among our servants were a number of female slaves, and, through marriage, three male members of that class who refused their freedom though granted by the law unless their wives could go with them, deliberately choosing to suffer with their families rather than seek their own freedom. On these slaves often fell all the ills of the home. One of their number was more to me than any of my other playmates. It was not often that my father so far lost himself as to lay violent hands on anyone; but if at

any time his wrath was aroused and there was no other outlet the slightest provocation would bring speedy vengeance upon the head of the unlucky slave.

I was about seven years old, when, one day, I happened in the yard and found all our servants gathered, their interest centered upon some object in their midst. Out of curiosity and unnoticed I pushed my way to the center of the circle and what I saw followed me as a shadowing nightmare long afterward. A man lay bound down to the beams of a rough cross, his arms extended, and stripped of nearly all his clothing. Our head servant stood by directing another who was leaning on a long paddle. At a signal the paddle was raised and brought down on the thighs of the prostrate man. A spasmodic upward throw of the head brought his face in my direction, revealing the face of my playmate slave. Sudden anger choked me, and in my puny wrath I ran to stop the next blow. It fell more lightly on my arm, the marks of which I still carry with me. The consternation that followed resulted in the release of the slave.

For slight acts of kindness, this class of people gave me an affection that I found not elsewhere; and it is the sweet memories that hover around the name of one of these helpless children of misfortune that inspire me to relate the incidents of this tale.

CHAPTER II

Promise of New Dignity

At the age of eighteen I was made aware of the scandalous fact that I was not married. This certainly was an abnormal state of affairs for one in our grade of society. It was the result partly from my dislike of such a move, partly from my mother's indulgence, but mainly from my father's straitened financial affairs. Like my grandfather, he had spent large sums of money in the effort to buy rank for my ambitious brother, with the result of a well-fed official in the capital, many empty promises and the loss of a large part of his estate. His service to the King brought little revenue; but while enough of his estate remained to maintain the tradition of the clan hospitality, and the rank was still attached to our name, it was sufficient for the dignity of a gentleman. I fear the losses disturbed me little as they served to postpone my unwelcome prospects of marriage.

Finally negotiations were afoot to dispose of me in a fitting manner, though, as was said, it was shamefully late. A young lady four years my senior was chosen to be honored as my bride. She lived three hundred miles from my home, and I had never

heard of her before. I exercised every means possible to find out something about her, and grew angry at our customs that treat the bride and groom as if they were the least interested persons in the transaction. By bribing the go-between I learned that the young lady was deformed, or scarred from some great accident. My protests were listened to with patient indulgence as something to be expected from the youngest member of the family. They told me that I had been misinformed, not with the intention of saying that the girl was not deformed, but it was the easiest way to say, "Young man, behave yourself." Like any other of my countrymen I submitted to what I called my fate.

Obedience is the first law of the household, and therein I think we are not behind the best civilized nations of the world. While the prospects of my coming marriage were hateful to me, I had no thought of disobeying. Perhaps, if at the time I had known to what my rebellious feelings would lead me, I would have welcomed the fate of a marriage with this unknown creature. Western nations are fond of saying that it is this spirit that has been the curse of our country. We have lacked, they say, the virile conception of what is right and readiness to suffer for it, and a willingness to enter the hurly-burly necessary for the reformation of our tyrannical customs. Our nation, they inform us with callous frankness, has become a byword among the

nations of the world because we lack the courage to fight down the wrongs inflicted upon us by unjust laws and official oppression. They call us cowards, not remembering that it takes no less courage to suffer patiently than to seek revenge.

As preparations for the wedding moved slowly forward I became the object of interest and considerable attention, now that the disgrace of bachelordom was to be removed and the dignity of manhood assumed by having my hair put up in a top-knot. The side of the question that brought me satisfaction was the prospect of being addressed in good language and treated with the respect due a married man.

About this time there came many rumors from the South that foreign nations had nearly all made treaties with our government.

Strange rumors had reached us of these barbarians from the West, their curious customs and incomprehensible names. It was said that they were all large of stature and dressed in black, the conclusion being that if they dressed in black they must be very dirty; but of course one should not be surprised at that, for what could one expect of barbarians? They were said to have piercing eyes, large noses and huge mouths, restless, energetic habits, ignorant of our customs and impolite. It was rumored and believed by most people that they used human flesh for medicine. Some of them en-

gaged in trade as merchants at the open ports, others were representatives of their governments, while others did not engage in trade or business of any kind, but spent their whole time in teaching a strange religion. These last had penetrated our North country to the famous city of Pyeng-Yang, a city situated on the river fifty miles from our home.

Up to that date I had never seen a foreigner, but since then I have associated with many of them. Some of our first impressions were wrong; but of others, among which are things not flattering, we have had no reason to change our opinion.

When that part of the mansion to which I was to bring my bride had been properly fitted up with its bright new paper and freshly oiled floors, it smiled out happily at me and seemed to be stretching its eaves jovially skyward as if the sheltering of brides was the jolliest kind of pastime; then I became almost contented to make friends with my fortune.

My father had business relations with wealthy men who resided in the city of Pyeng-Yang, and the interests of my approaching wedding made it desirable for someone to visit the city. To my delight, it was proposed to send my friend, Tong-siki, and myself to look after these affairs. My experience did not justify responsibility in business matters, so they were placed in the hands of Tong-siki.

I was delighted with the prospects of a sight of the city with its many shops, the news of the distant outside world, and then, too, perhaps I would have a chance to see the strange foreigner from the West.

From the discussions relating to our intended journey I picked up new facts regarding the family of my future alliance. The young lady whom I was to honor by accepting as my bride, having no name of her own, was known as the daughter of Mr. Yi. That gentleman some years previous had discarded his first wife, the mother of the nameless girl, and had taken another and prettier than she. He had owned considerable rice land in that section of the country, which up to the present had supported his first wife. Now, however, on the marriage of her daughter, the property would pass to the hands of my father, to be held secure for me until the time when he should need it no more. This arrangement, while seeming heartless in its treatment of the girl's mother, was an effort to save the lands from the avaricious magistrates, who had begun a new system of squeezing, and there was no way to satiate their ravenous appetites. My father was supposed to be the only man in the North whose property was secure. Mr. Yi, at one time, held powerful influence at the capital, but in the game of politics had lost it all. For the present proposed transfer of property he was to be repaid by friendly political influence that my father might be able to render him.

The property would amount to considerable, and as my father's exchequer was at a low ebb, the proposition pleased him, knowing full well that it was a symptom of Mr. Yi becoming a victim of his imagination, and would part with much more of his property for that Will-o'-the-wisp, governmental preferment. Surely, it seemed that the golden stream that had for years flowed outward had changed its direction to the home of the great Sung-ji.

CHAPTER III

An Interruption

When preparations for our departure to Pyeng-Yang were nearly completed, we were suddenly interrupted by the sickness of my father. His illness having so profound an influence upon my future, I find it necessary to relate the incident at this point.

He was attacked by one of those terrible, nameless fevers so common in our land. When all simpler remedies had failed to effect a cure, members of the household, with the solicitude usual to our people, called in a sorceress to drive away the demon of the disease.

She came on a certain evening, bringing a huge drum and several assistants with her. One of the number was a woman carrying a cymbal. These two persons had the sinister look common to people of their profession, while two others were young and attractive, wearing bright colored garments that showed off well in the torch lights against the dark background of the night.

The best sorceress in the country had been procured by the promise of a large sum of money, and the effort to secure her had advertised the matter so well that the neighboring towns turned out in great

numbers to watch the incantations—over the greatest man in North Korea. They were not surprised that he was sick, for what could politically powerful men expect when their evil deeds constantly invited demon possessions? They knew that at such scenes, where large money was at stake to inspire the sorceress to display her utmost cunning, there would be uncanny incidents enough to please the most morbid curiosity.

My father had been lying on a silk-covered mattress spread out on the floor but at the request of the sorceress he was rolled in a mat and brought out into the yard. He seemed too indifferent or too sick to pay any attention to what they were trying to do with him.

When all was ready the four women took their places in a half-circle about the sick man. The one with the drum struck it tentatively, paused, glanced at her companions, touched the drum again softly, then beat a long monotonous roll. The cymbals clanged, and the dancers began posturing, keeping time with the beating of drum and cymbals. As the incantations proceeded the beating grew loud and rapid and the dancing more active.

Late in the evening one of the bystanders was asked to hold a demon-stick—a willow branch about three feet long—over his head in both hands. The woman then announced to the crowd that when the stick should begin to shake beyond the control of

the man holding it, it would be a sign that the demon was in the stick; that the man would be irresistibly forced to run beneath a tree that stood near the yard, and the demon would leap up into the branches. At the root of the tree was placed a bottle into which, she announced, she proposed to force the demon and fasten him in. The drumming and dancing continued all night, and the man with the stick was repeatedly relieved by others; but the demon was very stubborn, the sorceress stated, having many reasons, because of the vicious life of his Excellency, the Sung-ji, to burrow deep within his soul, therefore it did not yield easily to her power.

"Some of you who have lost your small holdings," she said, "could have prophesied long ago that the worst devils would have him in due time, but be not impatient of my efforts. When the signs become favorable, watch! My reputation shall not suffer, though the demons prove a hundredfold more fierce than heretofore known."

Finally, glancing through the crowd, she seized hold of a nervous-looking young man and ordered him to hold the demon-stick.

"Now, sir," said she, "something striking will happen. The devil is about to leave the sick man. He can no longer withstand my power. You watch me, think of nothing else, see all my movements, listen to the sound of the drum, give yourself up to the powers of the air. Immediately the demon will

leave the sick man and leap upon the stick, and perch there like a bat, while your hands will tremble and shake beyond your control. Don't let loose. He will drag you over yonder wall to that tree. When you touch the tree the spirit will leap into its branches—then let go."

This she proclaimed at the top of her voice with wild looks and gesticulations.

The young man seized the stick as directed and waited. It had been noisy before, but now pandemonium reigned. The sorceress struck the drum furiously, the cymbal clanged and the dancers leaped with frantic hysteria. She looked the young man in the eyes and shook her head. Then the stick trembled.

A great "Ah!" broke from the lips of the bystanders.

"The demon is in the stick!" the people shouted.

The woman ceased beating her drum, swung her arms wildly in the air and pointed to the tree, and away sped the man struggling with the shaking stick. He rushed to the wall and over it and to the tree with the unerring obedience of a hypnotic subject. On touching the tree the willow branch fell.

"Look!" the crowd shouted, "it's in the tree, hanging to the limbs of the tree!"

Drum and cymbals were brought and the tree besieged till a bit of white paper which had been placed beside the empty bottle, was seen to spring suddenly

into the air and descend inside of it, and the final act of the night's drama closed. The bit of paper caught in the eddy of wind caused by the demon's headlong plunge, followed him into the bottle, proving to any possibly skeptical minds that the devil had been cowed and beaten. The sorceress corked him in; and handled the bottle with careless indifference to its terrible occupant, as if bottling the devil was the simplest thing imaginable.

I hastened back to look at my father. He had not changed his position, and when raised up seemed weaker than when brought out the previous day.

The sorceress admitted that he might be so for the present, but soon he would rally from the demon attack, now that the fiend was gone and safely fastened in a bottle and under her power.

The woman received the stipulated sum, with a present in addition, and many expressions of gratitude from members of the family and neighbors, then took her departure.

Two weeks more of sickness followed, during which time preparations were repeatedly made for my father's expected death. Once we really knew that he was breathing his last. Crying and wailings spread throughout the mansion and out into the town. Some member of the family spread a mat on the floor, extending from the place where he lay to the open door. Another climbed to the roof of the house with my father's coat. Swinging the gar-

ment in the air he called loudly to the departing spirit to return and occupy the garment, that we might worship it in the ancestral tablet. My mother dragged another garment along the mat and repeated, "Nam-u-am-i-ta-bul," a Buddhistic incantation from India, invoking the aid of Buddha for the securing and propitiation of the departing spirit.

My father disappointed all these preparations for his death, as well as disappointing his creditors, who, by the way, were the loudest of all in their wailings. A month later he was so much recovered that he ordered us to hasten our departure for Pyeng-Yang, that we might be able to return before the summer rains should make the river dangerous.

We had need of haste, for the delay was fraught with many consequences impossible for anyone to foresee.

CHAPTER IV

On the Tong River

Preparations for the journey were completed by having my hair put up in a topknot, at which time my official name, Sung-yo, was given to me. My approaching marriage would soon make the change necessary; so the matter was hastened, that my presence among my father's creditors as a representative of the Sung-ji estate might have the proper dignity.

All our servants were called out to hasten our departure, and there was the hustle and hurly-burly usual on such occasions.

We secured a boat peculiar to this part of the country. It was about thirty feet long and eight feet wide, the sides rising only eighteen inches above the surface of the water, while the ends narrowed to a point and rose high in the air. At the rear a long sweep was used more for guiding the boat than for propelling it. At the prow were arranged two sets of oars and seats for four men. It would require the utmost effort of five men to force the boat up stream; but on the trip down little labor was necessary other than the effort of the steersman. These unique boats were built for the transportation of fuel and

grain up and down a stream, filled with many shallow rapids.

I am more particular in the description of this boat, as later such a craft figured so largely in changing the course of events, profoundly affecting the lives of those whose history I am attempting to relate.

The boat was bailed out and washed, matting laid on the bottom, and an awning was erected over the center, covering two thirds of the available space. Provisions were stored away to last a week. Two dancing girls joined us at the last moment. We thought they were necessary to relieve, by song and story, the journey of any tedium.

Two valets increased our number to a company of eleven persons—a large number for the comfort of two young men. Yet as the number would impress the officials and the Sung-ji creditors with our standing, and debts could be collected easier, the seeming extravagance would be a matter of economy. At least that was the opinion of the great Sung-ji.

I have traveled in many sections of the country, and in other lands in the East, but I have never gazed upon any scenery more beautiful than that along the great Tong River. Nature has done everything for our country, while man has done nothing.

We swept down over the rapids, past boats loaded

with huge piles of fuel, past others working their snaillike pace upstream, past scores of half-naked men straining and tugging their way up the rapids. Sometimes these Titans of the river seemed to be standing still in midstream, leaning against the current and straining at their ropes with prodigious effort. At each cry of their leader, "Oi-ha," a chorus echoing from their deep chests would chant, "Oi-ha," their muscles would bulge and the boat would start an inch, a foot, a yard, then smooth water would be reached. There were fishermen in tiny boats with large strings of trout tied to the stern testifying to their industry. We occasionally passed ferries filled with men, women, and children, dressed in white and gaudy colors. They were all mixed up with cattle, horses, and donkeys, the last showing their discontent by prolonged brays. The sharp hills along the river side; the narrow valleys with their rich grain; the rocky cliffs, pierced with caves at the water's edge; the water fowl, springing into the air in front of our boat; the clouds, with their lights and shadows reflected in the water; and the rapid motion of the boat, gave one a feeling of exhilaration and delight.

Tong-siki always proved a delightful companion. He had a philosophy of his own, and the disturbed times of the last decade led him to exercise his gifts with great diligence. He was ever poetic, and the river, mountains, fields of grain, and the sky filled

with banks of clouds, seemed to inspire him with the muses on all such occasions.

He gave evidence to his pleasure by repeating to himself snatches of poetry from the classics, adding now and then a line of his own. He held the seers of the past in great reverence, but was naturally intolerant of control, and sometimes he did violence to those old masters. His presumption in quoting the classics with his own productions came as a jar on one's pleasures.

"Do you think that is better?" I asked.

"Hump," he grunted, and looking away, hummed on.

"You love Confucius, do you?" he finally asked. "So do I. How much has he done for us? Did he make these hills and valleys; these fields, trees, flowers, lights and shadows? No one can appreciate more than I the great volume of ethics he created, which to my mind has made us what we are; but as great as was Confucius, his influence did not in the slightest touch the millions of the West, among whom are also great peoples, which argues that his teachings are not the only things sacred. If Confucius is more sacred in our thoughts than are his writings, then a man is above anything man can create, and, Sung-yo, we are men. Admitting that my verses are dull, yet if they express an independent personality, why should they, though associated with the teachings of great men, be discords?

"I have heard much of the Western foreigner," he added, after a pause. "I have been thinking of him and his teachings in relation to our ideals. Do you know where I went when I was absent four months ago? I did not tell you the facts when I let it be known that I made a visit to an uncle a hundred li east of here. I had an unconquerable desire to see the foreigner and learn the character of his civilization, so made a trip to the capital for that purpose."

"Is it possible," I gasped. "Did you see them? What do they look like? Do they eat human flesh? Why did you not tell me?"

"Why," said he, indifferent to my storm of questions, but glancing curiously at me, "you look like a foreigner when you do that. They are full of animation. I do not know what they eat I was not so much interested in that as some others seem to be. While they know nothing of Confucius, they do possess a system of ethics, and an intellectual wealth that is peculiarly theirs. They are really a cleanly people, though one of their servants told me that they had to bathe nearly every day in order to keep so. Curious, is it not, when we keep clean by bathing only now and then, and that during the summer months," he added, glancing ruthfully at the unkempt appearance of his servant. "They are self-confident and have piercing eyes that make one feel uncomfortable."

Here Tong-siki broke into a great laugh.

"Why," said he, "they sit on chairs and not on the floor as we do—chairs with spindling legs that might tip over or break down. With their tight trousers sitting on long-legged chairs they look like a species of crab that I have seen. I was invited to try one of these chairs, and they smiled when they saw me curl my feet up and sit as I would on a mat. You know that I am somewhat of an athlete. Well, I kept my balance without accident. They walk in their houses with their shoes on; but that which struck me, the most incongruous of all is the claim of the superiority of their religion over ours."

Here Tong-siki paused.

"Go on," said I, "go on." I dislike his philosophy at times. He had forgotten his mirth and was soberly looking at the water.

"I suppose," he continued, "we must not think too much of their barbaric ways, as they did not have Confucius to teach them self-control and politeness. True, as far as I could learn, by constant questioning of those who are the most intimately connected with them, few seem to have vicious habits, but in their bearing they all are rudeness itself. They seem to have money and dress well, and must be of good rank in their own country, therefore we should regard them as our guests while they are here; but instead of receiving hospitality with becoming modesty, they assume an air of superiority, and are ready

to argue the superiority of their country over ours. They never speak of themselves protestingly when they are flattered by our people, but seem to take it for granted that all we say by way of politeness is true.

"Would you believe it," he continued, looking impressively at me, "their women meet all visitors, talk with them, and they are treated more politely by the men than the men treat each other. It shocked me at first, and I thought there must be something terribly wrong with such a people, but here is a point that puzzles me. Confucius has done much for us, but he never made us equal, nor womanhood respected. Perhaps the foreigner is right, and they should be respected and put on a plane of equality with men, but how can we respect them," he added, glancing at the dancing girls, "when those on whom we put the most effort develop to nothing better than playthings? But then," he mused, "perhaps the effort might be in a better direction."

Fearing his philosophy would become tiresome, I said, "What do the foreigners eat, anyway?"

"Eat," he repeated, "that is it. We Koreans are everlastingly thinking of what we may eat."

"Well," was my uninspired reply, "we have to do it three times a day."

"I did glance through a window," said he, not noticing my remark, "and saw them on their spindle-legged chairs around a large table, as large as the

floors of some houses, filled with food of all kinds except rice. Think of it, no rice and eating without chopsticks!"

"What! with their fingers?" I asked.

"No, with two-pronged iron things."

"Why don't you tell me more?" I impatiently asked.

"Why—why," said he, "they drove me away. Yes, I was looking in an open window from a respectful distance, simply taking note of things, when one of their number sprang up and coming to the window hurled at me a bone that he had been picking, and shouted, 'Begone!' using the lowest language. Of course I felt the insult, but then you know they never had Confucius to teach them politeness."

I was surprised at Tong-siki's unusual charitableness. He is a large man, nearly half a head taller than the average, with a massive forehead, forceful of character and always ready to resent a wrong or an insult. I had known him most of my life, and while he did not come of a family of rank, I had the most profound respect for him. Wherever he moved he unconsciously assumed the bearing of a master, and seemed to fret at the conditions that obtained in Korean society and in the government. It was sometimes whispered that at heart he was disloyal to his Majesty and would some day be heading a revolt. When such gossip came to him he would

laugh, and on one occasion was heard to remark: "There is not cohesive force enough in the Korean heart to permit them to hang together long enough to drive a mink out of his hole, to say nothing of seizing an intolerable magistrate, or facing a Western rifle in the hands of his Majesty's troops."

The simple remark convinced many that he was a dangerous man.

That night as I lay on a mat in the bottom of the boat, I watched Tong-siki, his head strongly outlined against the sky. I thought of our boyhood companionship, and all that his rugged strength had meant to me. I believed him capable of heroic deeds and trusted him, and his presence made me glad; but little did I think of the tragic events that lay in the hand of destiny waiting for my friend.

The first night on the river, some two hours after sunset, we tied up to a bank in front of a fishing village and found an inn for our party. As I rose to move from the boat two of the servants ran to aid me up the slippery bank. I willingly leaned on them as is the custom of all our delicately raised people. Tong-siki, however, was at the top of the bank as soon as the boat touched shore, and had found the inn before the slow-moving servants began to think of it.

The inn was one of those generally provided for travelers in the interior. With its tiled roof, it stood out in strong contrast with the thatched roofs of all

its neighbors. Most of the houses in the vicinity could boast of only two rooms. There were four rooms to this particular inn. The one occupied by Tong-siki and myself and our two servants, was eight by ten feet. The dancing girls took up their quarters in the women's apartments, and the rest of the party were distributed about the building to suit their own convenience. I did not know then of the contrast between our native inns and those of other peoples that I have visited in later years. The room we occupied was innocent of any pretensions to comfort, absolutely without an article of furniture. I stooped low in order not to break my hat on entering the door. The roof beams were low, requiring one to dodge in walking the length of the room. As is the case in all our houses the walls were of mud. They were not papered, and the rafters above were black with smoke. Straw mats on the floor were our beds, and blocks of wood were the pillows for our heads.

The innkeeper, knowing who we were, and being anxious to please those of rank, did everything possible for our comfort. Regardless of the warm weather, he built a great fire under the floor, but we were used to hot floors and accepted his politeness in the spirit it was intended. When he brought the evening meal, he protested that it was hardly worth giving to the dogs, and how could he presume to offer it to gentlemen of such high breeding? Would

we condescend to pardon him for such unintended insult? We assured him that the rice, for there was little else, was of the most delicious flavor, and that the spirits must be kind to him to enable him to season it to such delicacy for such unworthy guests as we. He bowed low and backed out of our presence.

I have since seen among the Western peoples many great and gilded inns. They were many stories high, with large retinues of servants; but instead of the delicate politeness showed us by our host, the guests were gazed at with a cold, critical stare, and the service rendered grudgingly, as if the guests were being put under great obligations. We lack many things in our country, and we are poor—how very poor! yet we have a great wealth of politeness. If consideration for the feelings of our fellows is a criterion of civilization, in comparing us with other nations, I wonder where the great Judge of the world would place my people.

A bit of cloth hanging from the edge of a cup filled with castor oil served as a lamp. We lay down for the night and left our lamp burning, as is our custom. Tong-siki spread a fresh mat that he had brought up from the boat, and lay with his gaze turned upward at a bit of cloth and paper fastened to a cross beam in the center of the room.

"I suppose," he finally said, meditatively, as if talking to the rags, "should I pull it down the innkeeper would be angry, and all the demons of the

air would be set loose and attack this house with fire; that the rat disease would begin crawling up the legs of the inmates of this home, and endanger all who stop here, and the posterity of this clan would be cut off from the land of the living. I suppose, should I pull it down, I would have ill luck all my life, and that these servants of ours would eat beans and potatoes without rice ever afterward; and that you, Sung-yo, would be heartbroken over the loss of your intended bride, and in the end get someone not as pretty as she. You might, indeed, be so terribly unfortunate as to secure someone not deformed. What a blessing it is that we have so many rags to hang up, and what a blessing it is that the demons are such fools that they can be propitiated by these things! How grateful we ought to be for what these demons have done for us to-night! They have graciously provided this hot, vermin-infested floor with its greasy, wood pillows. How good we are to propitiate them while the officials squeeze us of our living! That being the case, these demons must be for the aid of the officials and have no place in a poor man's home."

Suddenly, Tong-siki sprang to his feet and hurled the fetish into a corner. I was horrified at such atheism and insult to the gods, and wondered if my friend had gone stark mad. He looked into my face and laughed; then went over to the corner, picked up the fetish and hung it back on its nail.

Fortunately our two companions were asleep, and did not see the insult offered the spirits, or the house would have been in an uproar.

"Why?" I gasped, on recovering from my astonishment.

He laughed softly to himself, as he often did when a boy after accomplishing some unusual feat. He then lay down and was immediately sound asleep. It did not occur to me till long afterward that the act was a studied purpose to set me thinking over our foolish superstitions.

CHAPTER V

A Magistrate

On the evening of the third day of our journey we reached the great city of Pyeng Yang. I had visited it several times before, but the city always held for me the same fascinating interest, for the traditions of our race center round these hills and valleys. Our country is hoary with age. The tramp of human feet, shod with the light sandal, has worn deep gulleys through the rugged mountain passes, and this city heard the footfall of the first company whose feet touched these virgin hills, for that company was its creator.

Just before sunset our boat swung around the bend of the river, and the city presented itself to our view—lovely, with the sunshine gilding her hill-tops and the rugged towers of her gates. The north end of the city, located high on a ridge of rocks that lined the river, turned upward like the stern of our boat. From that point the wall swept gracefully downward along the riverside, and in the distance seemed again to rise exactly like the prow of our boat. Indeed, the singular resemblance has led many to imagine the city designed by some ancient deity in the shape of a boat, and they have carried out the

idea by erecting pillars of stone out in a plain, to which, it is said, the city is moored. The digging of wells has been prohibited for centuries for fear of piercing the bottom which would admit a flood, and thus drown all the inhabitants. I am of the opinion, however, that if the water had been of a better quality the prohibition would never have been.

One would not think from the city's present decadent state, that at one time it was the dictator of elegance for the East; Pyeng-Yang was our ancient capital, and from her artisans Japan has learned many things for which she has now become famous. Her high rank in letters and art to-day are the fruits of Korean industry and learning. Japan learned how to worship at our hands; all the ancient religions she has worth possessing came from our seers. Our country is full of monuments of our successful warfare, and we have again and again beaten the armies of the Island Kingdom to their knees and driven them from our shores. The city well deserves the name of a boat, as it has been the bearer of blessings to millions of people; but, alas! there is little left that would suggest her famous history. Her golden age passed with the removal of the palace to the South country. The great frowning walls and the lofty gates, the stately river, the governor's and the magistrate's residences, and the temple of the God of War, are the only things left that suggest her past greatness.

As we approached the city profound quietness prevailed. The rat-tat-tat of the washerwoman at the riverside, the jingle of bells on pack-ponies, and the occasional barking of a dog were the only sounds that reached us. Nothing was heard to suggest the presence of thousands of people crowded together beyond these walls. Its quietness made one feel as if one were approaching a beleaguered city. The silence came over me as a great sadness. Tongsiki is right, I thought, a terrible death has settled down upon her people, and down in my heart I echoed the cry of a man I once saw suffering under the paddle of a magistrate. Life! life! O, give us life!

We entered the great East Gate, over which hangs a chain taken as a trophy from the American steamer destroyed in our river many years ago. The scene inside the city was all animation, not the wild rush that I have since observed in American and British concessions of the Chinese ports, but a dignified moderation of which the East has always been proud. I have pondered much over the contrasted peculiarities of the East and West, and I protest against the popular insinuation that our poverty is the result of our moderation. It seems to me childish to scream and rush after one's dollars; to be indifferent to the immaculate character of one's suit while one works; to contort the face; to laugh with abandon; to leap and run; to enjoy the hurly-burly of competition.

Such things bewilder one and border on violence. We love self-repression, dignity of carriage, and calm demeanor. Reflection and moderation are the ideals of our sages, yet foreigners refer to us as childish. I think they mean by that the smallness of our ideas and our petty prejudices.

We urged our way through a great mass of people, a sea of white, mixed with green and pink. It was the close of a market day, and the streets were filled with countrymen in their great hats, rims nine feet in circumference, and women of the city with hats twice the size. In the jam a hat would be caught now and then and crushed, and the owner, turning, would scowl, and give vent to his resentment by revilings, but not addressing anyone in particular. No one noticed and no one cared. To have noticed would have been an acknowledgment of an insult which would have caused the loss of one's dignity. Everybody moved, jostled, got in everyone's way, yet there was no undue hurrying.

In some places shops crowded nearly to the middle of the street, leaving only a narrow lane for the crowds. Most of the shops were small; the keeper, sitting on the floor, could reach all his goods. Occasionally a man dressed in the livery of a yamen runner would force his way through the mass of people. Their bearing is always insolent, and the people give way with reluctance to these who are the most hated among all Korea's millions.

We had not been in the street more than ten minutes when I noticed a great commotion at the farther end. The white mass of people were swaying and surging down the street and out into the side alleyways. Soon calls of "Clear the way," were heard. Uniformed outrunners of the magistrate appeared, swinging long sticks and clubs, reviling and clubbing the people indiscriminately. Closely following upon their heels was the magistrate's chair with its crowd of bearers and followers in bright livery—white, blue and purple. The magistrate sat with an imperturbable face looking straight ahead—one of those vain, self-indulgent faces, yet withal carrying a self-deprecatory expression worn by most of our officials, which the people have learned too well to mistake for sincerity.

I had been so engrossed with the crowd and the many new sights that I had not noticed Tong-siki since we landed, except that I was dimly conscious that he was at my side. As the runners approached, I joined the general panic and fled. Reaching the entrance to a side alley I glanced back, and to my amazement saw Tong-siki in the middle of the street, on his face the mild look of a wondering countryman. Had he gone mad? I asked myself.

The nearest runner rushed upon him and swung his stick menacingly. "Clear the way! clear the way!" he shouted. "You foul vermin! you offspring of dogs!"

Tong-siki stood, his eyes growing large and round in surprised wonder. The club was raised and aimed violently at Tong-siki's head. The interruption was so sudden and unexpected, and the onrush so great that a dozen men were instantly in the mixup. The club fell, striking Tong-siki on the shoulder, but divided its force more heavily on the head of one of the magistrate's servants. The blow half stunned the runner for a moment, then he turned his own club upon the man who had struck him. Tong-siki, seemingly stupid a moment ago, was awake in an instant, and rushed for the crowd in which he would have been hidden had not the magistrate arrived, and being compelled to halt, the servants in the rear of his chair pushed forward. They seeing a fleeing man with a broken hat, seized and held him. The two runners at the front had gone mad. They had dropped their clubs and were wringing and twisting at each other's topknots, while general confusion prevailed. Companions were trying to separate the combatants, while the chair bearers were calling to clear the way for his excellency, the magistrate. Finally the two men were pushed into an alley, where they were separated and the procession proceeded. In a twinkling Tong-siki's hands were tied behind him. A rope was passed around his neck in front and tied back, so that the weight of his hands would easily choke him. With a kick and a curse he was ordered on.

All had happened so quickly that I had not even begun to think till I saw them push Tong-siki forward; then I ran for the magistrate's chair to protest. A club was raised and I dodged. Tong-siki glanced at me and smiled with a look of proud dignity.

Greatly disturbed in mind, I followed to the yamen's gate, and remained about the gate with our two servants as companions till nearly midnight, without gaining any information regarding my friend. Finally, greatly dejected, we found our way to the inn, where the innkeeper, knowing of our calamity, had provided everything for our comfort. True to the spirit of all our people, he regarded the victim of the magistrate with a feeling of respect and deepest solicitude. So great is this feeling against the official class that sometimes even a criminal is regarded as a hero.

"What possessed Tong-siki to deliberately place himself in the way of violence and arrest?" was asked a score of times without an answer. No one knew better than he that it would mean days of imprisonment, and cruel beatings; and probably the magistrate would make it an occasion for squeezing him of all the lands he possessed in this section of the country. As used as I was to Tong-siki's impulsive ways, I was utterly bewildered and could make nothing of it all. I tossed upon my mat till daylight, resolving that if I could not get audience

with the magistrate I would hasten overland the next day and place the matter in the hands of my father, whose rank would unlock any prison door in the province.

I dozed off into a sleep, and awoke with a start to find my room door wide open and the sun streaming in. The scenes of yesterday came back as a flood, and I struggled with the problem of Tong-siki's rescue, when suddenly a shadow fell across the floor, and springing up I was speechless with amazement; there sat Tong-siki smiling at me. I pulled him into the room, held his hand, and plied him with questions. He laughed at my caresses.

"How did you get away? What did you do it for? Where have you come from? and you have a new suit!"

"Well," said he, when I gave him a chance to speak, "I did not know that you really cared for me before," and he laughed heartily.

Others came into the room expectant with curiosity, while two yamen runners stood obsequiously at the door.

"You may go now," said he authoritatively turning to the two men. With a prolonged "Ya-a-a," and a low bow they withdrew. To my inquiring glance he said:

"They are the two who conducted me here this morning as a mark of honor."

Tong-siki maintained a profound gravity while

the morning meal was being brought, and at last, piqued at his indifference to my curiosity at the wizardlike trick, I assumed utter indifference to the whole affair, which seemed to amuse him hugely. At the close of the meal he suggested a walk, and as soon as we were beyond the house he said:

"You know I could not talk with all those people about. It was enough for them to know that the magistrate had honored me. Last night I was thrown into the common prison and left there. I slept fairly well, better than you did, perhaps," he added, glancing humorously in my face. "In the morning the magistrate called me up for examination. It happened that the man ordered to lead me out was the one who had struck me the night before. His head was bandaged, and he looked sour and ugly enough. I stood bareheaded like any criminal waiting for the magistrate to appear. Presently he came, half carried by servants, one on either side, in the helpless fashion that always nauseates me. A servant filled his pipe, another lit it, while another brought his large glasses and adjusted them to his nose. After rolling his eyes several times in a proper, languid dignity, he peered over his glasses at me—for he could not see through them. I had been ordered down on my knees with my face to the ground. I refused, and the man nearest me seized my hair with the intention of forcing me down.

" 'Beware!' said I, 'in the name of the great Kim

Sung-ji.' He hastily retreated. At that moment the magistrate saw me standing, and his face grew purple with anger at the insult. 'Bind him! down with him;' he ordered, with a string of invectives.

"Two of my captors sprang to execute the order. Stepping quickly in front of the magistrate I said, 'Do you know whom you are ordering bound?' He lifted his hand to hold his minions in check and gazed a moment in my face, and grew white to the lips.

" 'You know me, do you, Nam-yoi?' said I. 'You almost forgot who gave you your office. You also forgot that if you had struck me your official head would have paid the price. Who are you and your minions here who ride down citizens on the streets, arrest, imprison and beat your superiors and those who have made you? You shall give account of yesterday's work before the Emperor.' I did not stop here, but said many things that I do not want to repeat even to you. I suppose I ought not to have been angry," he added, soberly, "as I had brought it all upon myself, but I was enraged at the injustice practiced upon our people. His humiliation was complete. Sliding down from his seat in the presence of his underlings he led me to his chair, got down on the floor, bumped his head at my feet, and implored my forgiveness. On promising to correct his habits of squeezing I let him off. Of course I did not intend to do otherwise.

"Last night when I saw him coming down the street I simply intended to interrupt his attack on the people, and publicly rebuke him, but affairs went further than I had intended. Yes," Tong-siki added, "he gave me this hat and suit of silk to take the place of the one ruined in the squabble last night, and urged many other things upon me which I refused to accept, things which under any other circumstances politeness would have compelled me to comply with. I refused to accept a palanquin and runners, and returned here with only the two men you saw at the door.

"While I was with your father in the capital two years ago I asked him to help this man to office, which he did. This accounts for my influence over him. Of course he overestimates my influence at the capital, and if your father should die I would have less than he, but of this he knows nothing. If at any time I were to fall into his power I would not give a bowl of rice for the chance of my life."

Tong-siki made the last remarks with a look of profound gravity, and years later it came back to me with the force of prophecy.

CHAPTER VI

The Foreigner

The most interesting feature of our trip was the opportunity to see a Western foreigner. I was walking on the embankment that forms the inside of the city wall, when suddenly around the bend, some distance in advance of me, I saw a crowd running eagerly toward the wall. Possessing my share of the curiosity that marks our Eastern people as peculiar, I hastened on to see what it was that caused the commotion. The crowd was approaching, and soon I saw it all. A man dressed in black, gigantic in stature, was surrounded by an excited, jabbering crowd. A tiger shown on the street could not have excited such curiosity. I stood still and waited for them to come up, and like the rest of the crowd I was soon absorbed in gazing at the strange apparition. He came on with now and then a glance at the mob at his heels. From his shoulders up he towered above everyone else. He had light-brown hair and blue eyes that were set deep beneath overhanging brows, and his skin was whiter than that of a woman. A black beard covered his face and hung down on his chest in a great mass. His forehead was high and nose prominent He glanced at me

with no unkindly light in his eyes, and, as he turned to look out over the city wall, I was emboldened like many others to feel of his clothes to find out their texture, and to feel of his shoes. The latter were of leather, different from anything that I had seen. As large as he was, his feet seemed monstrous. Fortunately he understood little of our language, for the remarks made by the crowd were not at all flattering.

"A real foreign devil! This is a real one! A real one!" passed from lip to lip.

"I-go! isn't he large! What would you do if he should get hold of you? Look at those feet and those hands, too! Has he got five fingers and five toes? Look and see."

"I-go-o! look at the whiskers and the black clothes. He must wear black to hide that of which he is ashamed!"

"What does he eat?"

"Where is his woman? Did he bring it? Has it whiskers, too?"

"What is he here for? Will he leave soon?"

"Look out! he is turning around. Let's follow him, ha-ha! he-he!"

These and a thousand other questions were asked from scores of throats without waiting for or expecting answers. We followed him to a house near the city wall where he was stopping. The crowd surged into the yard and rudely swung the door

open, and many crowded in. With others I retired to the outside gate and listened to the remarks and speculations regarding the Westerner. He was a physician, it was said, and was kindly disposed toward the people. Many had been helped, and some healed of their diseases under his ministrations; and the strangest part of it was that there were some who admitted that they were followers of the new faith. They called it the "Yasu-kyo."

You always find some one in a crowd who is ready to assume the role of an oracle. A thin-faced fellow with a sinister looking mouth, holding by the hand a little girl whom by her dress it was easy to see he was training for a professional dancing girl, worked his way to the middle of the crowd, and loudly cleared his throat to draw attention.

"Tell us, Ho-yongi," they said, turning to him and giving him room, "tell us about him."

"O, yes," someone shouted, "how much squeeze did you get out of that land purchased for the foreigner?"

"Ho-yongi?" I had heard that name before. A fellow who lived close to the magistrate and acted as a tool to do all his dirty work. If he were a trusted agent of the Westerner I wanted little to do with the latter.

Ho-yongi waited until all had fixed their attention upon him.

"Do you know what he is here for?" he asked, im-

pressively. "He is here to build hospitals, erect churches and school buildings, as they say they are doing at the capital. He is here, and more are coming like him, to turn our old faith upside down. The Christians care nothing about Buddha, or Confucius, and they hate our fetishes."

"Did you hear him tell anything about that?" someone shouted.

"Why, I should think so," was the reply. "Do you think I am deaf? What do you think I have been spending the last month with this man for?"

"For a squeeze," someone shouted.

"He tells all sorts of lies," he continued, ignoring the interruption. "He says that in his country they have horses three times as large as ours, and houses that are ten times as high as ours, and that they have fire machines that run on iron roads, and will outrun our best donkey and carry five hundred men at once. He told us one night that the world is round" —here Ho-yongi paused to give the right impression.

"O! that is easy," someone said; "round like a cash. Look about you as far as you can see, it is round."

"No," replied Ho-yongi, in deep disgust, "round like a ball. The sun stands still and the earth turns around once every day and night, and he thought we were fools enough to believe that. Anyone knows that if we turned over we would fall off from the

other side." They all laughed heartily, while Ho-yongi continued:

"This fellow is harmless; he knows little of our language, and visitors guy him continually. It is lots of fun. He has with him a man who has become a Christian, a man born somewhere off in the country, who has little learning, and his hands are as rough as a dog's paw. He has been living in the capital for several years, and I think in consequence of the chance it gives him to squeeze all the money he wants he has adopted their religion. He is, withal, an impudent fellow. I invited him to my house, and offered him wine, but under the plea of his religion he insulted my house and broke the first law of etiquette by refusing to drink. He is always urging every one he meets to become a Christian. I have never found out how much he gets a head for converts. I offered to bring in any number of fellows to do the doctrine if he would divide with me. He denied that that was what he was after. Evidently he wants it all himself. I tell you what," Ho-yongi said, pausing and looking impressively around the circle, "there is something sinister in their presence here; some deep deviltry in it all." Lowering his voice, he continued, "It is reported that in Seoul these same foreign doctors caught babies and boiled them up in huge caldrons, and made medicine with which to practice their dark arts. I am keeping a close watch over them, and it will not take me long

to get to the bottom of their scheme, then you will hear from me."

We all stood and stared with mouths wide open as Ho-yongi and his dancing girl withdrew and closed the compound gate after them with the air of privileged persons.

The crowd gradually scattered and sought their homes. It was evident that Ho-yongi's last remarks had made a deep impression.

In a few days mutterings spread throughout the city and came echoing back like a voice against a cliff, distorted and enlarged. Then I recalled the malignant face of Ho-yongi, and withheld my judgment. It was soon circulated that the governor contemplated taking measures to expel the foreigner from the city.

I had seen little of Tong-siki for several days, and had had no chance to talk of these matters, the pressure of business matters having claimed his whole attention. He had presented several accounts to the magistrate for him to collect, which had led to the arrest of a number. Wives, sons, and brothers were constantly at our door pleading for those imprisoned. Tong-siki insisted upon receiving the money due him and promised no help until the debts were paid.

"But," they said, "it is not only what we will have to pay you, but the squeeze that will be extorted from us by the magistrate and his runners." Tong-

siki promised to secure them from injustice at the hands of the officials and their agents if they would pay their just debts, and it was astonishing how quickly such promises brought the money that was due.

CHAPTER VII

Searching for a Bride

On an afternoon three days after my first view of the Westerner, Tong-siki invited me to walk with him. "I want you to come," said he, "across the river and see a wedding procession that is expected to arrive to-night. I have just seen the men who came in advance to secure the inn for the party, who will stay in the city a few days.

I was glad of a new diversion, but wondered why it should cause Tong-siki so much interest at this particular time. As we climbed into the ferryboat filled with passengers, I asked him where he expected the party to hail from.

"Kong-ju," said he.

"Kong-ju?" I stammered. He nodded in assent, and sitting down in the bottom of the boat, gazed lazily down stream.

Kong-ju was the home of my future bride, and I knew then that the party coming into the city that night would not be a wedding procession, but simply my future bride journeying northward to live with her mother until I should come for her at the time fixed for our marriage.

The party soon appeared. There were three

chairs, each borne by four men, lusty fellows from the South. Their only clothing was a pair of baggy trousers, tied to the waist, while the legs were rolled up. The men's backs were deep brown from exposure to the sun, and they were dusty and worn from their trip of nine hundred li. The chairs were closed so that it was quite impossible to guess which contained my future bride. A long retinue followed, pack ponies with boxes and bundles, and men on foot. As the party swept by we fell in behind with other travelers for the city and recrossed the river with them.

In my revolt at the iron of our ancient laws I had a great desire to see the girl, but custom forbade it. The only chance to see whether she was deformed, as I believed she was, would be to steal into the women's quarters and somehow watch for her unobserved. Such an act would place me, if discovered, on the plane with the drunken rowdies of the city, and what would be worse reveal my identity to the girl and her family. Tong-siki thought it could be managed, and with his usual readiness to help me undertook the task of finding out all about the inn in which they were to stop for two days. He returned late that night with the information that he had seen her, and that I might have a chance the following night. To all my questionings as to what she looked like he would make no reply save, "Wait and see."

The next night, late in the evening, he led me out on the street and down through the alleys a long distance into the heart of the city, past festering gutters and nauseating pools, past the low wine shops where voices were raised in high altercations, under tiny paper lanterns hung on poles to light the streets, by rows of shops carefully closed for the night, past rows of lights twinkling from the cracks of the buildings forming the women's apartments. At last we reached a building that loomed out of the darkness, giving one in the deep gloom the impression of unusual proportions. It was set on the corner of the street with an alley at the back. The roof of the house was covered with tiles and stood higher from the ground than most of its neighbors.

"Too late," said I, "they have all retired."

"Wait and see," Tong-siki replied, in a cautious voice. "If you are going to call them up I am going back."

I took the hint and closed my lips. He led the way around the corner and down the street at right angles along the side of the inn. A few yards beyond a light shone brightly through closed paper doors and windows. We were about to pass the last door when Tong-siki seized and dragged me into the deep shadows of the overhanging roof. His grasp startled me into an involuntary "O!" when immediately the door opened and a man stepped out. He

glanced full at us, but his eyes, not yet accustomed to the darkness, failed to discern us. He looked up and down the street and at the sky. The wind threatening the light in the room, he returned and closed the door. Tobacco smoke had poured out upon the street suggesting a large company within.

I started from where we were standing, but Tong-siki made no move to go on; again I started but he remained silent, then I understood. "Go ahead, you may pull my arm off and I will not whisper, indeed, I won't," I meekly urged.

He led me into the alley back of the inn. The wall surrounding the yard was made of coarse mats, sewed together and bound to posts about seven feet high. Tong-siki led the way to the center of the wall and began fumbling along the line of one of the posts. Presently he flung the flap back and we stood peering into a large yard. On the side opposite us was the inn with its wing, flanked on our side with the mat wall. Light was percolating through the paper of a dozen windows and doors. We paused to listen, the whirr of a spinning wheel and the clang-clack of a handloom pointed out the women's quarters. I followed Tong-siki through the fence, my heart palpitating loud enough to be heard all over the yard. Some one might step from one of those dozen windows or doors any moment.

Tong-siki swung the whole side of the matting near the post loose and fastened the corner at the

top lightly, so that, while presenting the appearance of a sound wall, a slight touch of the hand would break it loose. I noticed the act and marveled at the amount of labor it must have caused him the night previous to arrange it all. We crept up to a window and he began very softly to rub the paper that covered the wide frame work. Soon a hole was made large enough for the eye.

"Look," he whispered.

"Nothing," said I, a moment later.

"What do you see?" he asked.

"A shadow on the wall to the right," I replied.

He stood studying a moment, then moved over to the left and worked a hole through the paper covering of the next window. He glanced in, then motioned to me. I placed my eye to the hole, but at first I could see only the outline of a woman sitting on the floor near the candle, who seemed to be bending over engaged in folding a garment that was lying at her feet. I looked till she turned her face full into the light which flared up at that moment revealing a face in which I could not see a trace of intelligence, and the impression of a stooping attitude that I had at first observed was caused by a deformed body. She presently stood up by the candle light, a hunchback, short and ugly.

A pull at my sleeve brought me quickly to my feet, and stepping back unguardedly, I knocked a stone loose which rolled down a short incline, start-

ing a hundred echoes. Suddenly a door in the opposite wing swung wide open, sending a broad flood of light across the yard full upon us. A man, without hat, coat or shoes, shot out into the yard and bounded toward me with a yell. Tong-siki swung me in the direction of the hole in the fence with a hoarse command to run. We ran, but I missed the opening, thinking that I saw our exit a little to the right. Tong-siki saw my mistake, and sprang by me and called to me to follow; but before I could turn our pursuer was already between us howling like a madman.

"Thief! robber! murderer! help! help!"

Already the house had emptied itself into the yard. Every door was open and the compound on our side was as light as day. The opposite side near the women's quarters still lay in a deep shadow. I ran for the darkest point and turned a sharp corner of the building with my pursuer at my heels. For a moment, his eyes not being accustomed to the darkness, he missed me, and I sprang for the fence. Missing the top, my hands shot through a hole in the matting. Immediately my pursuer was upon me. He seized me by the legs and yelled for help. I hung to the matting with the desperation of terror. Another wrench and I would have lain on my face a captive in the yard, but at that moment someone seized my wrist from the outside. It was Tong-siki, blessed Tong-siki! A knife slipped down the

matting, then a furious pull brought me half through the opening, and the face of my assailant to the aperture. There was a sharp thud and he let loose.

I scrambled to my feet and ran without a word. Down the alley we went into the gutters, hatless, shoeless, panting and exhausted. Before making the turn into the larger street below we paused and looked back. Lights were flickering here and there, while calls and shouts had raised a general hubbub in the neighborhood. It was late and no one was moving in front of us, so we crept out across the street into another alleyway. In doing so we passed under a lantern hanging over the door of a wine shop. Here we paused and Tong-siki looked me over.

"Where are your sandals, and sock, and hat? Where did you tear your clothes?" he asked, without a smile.

I was too exhausted and sore to reply. We moved on, and I found my feet torn and bleeding, but too profoundly thankful for our escape to complain.

On reaching the inn Tong-siki went on ahead, and finding the coast clear came back for me. As we stepped into the yard we were greeted with a slight cough. Glancing up above me was the evil face of Ho-yongi, the Snake. He looked me over from my rumpled hair to my bare and bleeding feet. Tong-siki greeted him with dignity. In a suave and oily voice Ho-yongi said that he was

passing and seeing the light thought he would glance in.

Tong-siki had left the door open which lighted the entrance to the compound where we stood. He had already stepped between me and our visitor, while I hastened into the room. He spoke with composed gravity, told Ho-yongi that he was glad to see him, hoped that he and his household were well. Ho-yongi's curiosity evidently was at fever heat to know what was the matter with me, but the lofty, cold politeness of Tong-siki froze him into silence. He finally withdrew with the usual salutations, "Hope you will rest in peace," but paused on the outside and said:

"Perhaps it will be of interest to you to know that we have seized the servants of the Western devil and they are in prison. The price of the new faith is a man's head, you know," he added, "and I fancy the foreigner's head is not very securely attached to his shoulders either. At least the paddle will keep warm on those Christian dogs to-night."

"So?" asked Tong-siki.

Ho-yongi glided out like a shadow, into the night.

The next day a new pair of shoes and hat and a fresh clean coat placed me on a better footing with the world. We heard that there had been a serious attempt at robbery at a certain inn in another part of the city the night before; that the robbers, while they were able to escape, had been stabbed several

times by the defenders of the home; that they had left their bloody marks along the streets for a considerable distance; that there were at least twenty in all; that it suggested an attitude on the part of the Tong-haks[1] to organize in bands to ruin the people; that a visitor who had come in with a party from Kong-ju the day before fought desperately with one of the robbers who was a giant in size and strength, and that the struggle was so great that nearly the whole compound fence was razed to the ground.

[1]Literally "Eastern Learning;" a society resembling the Boxer of China.

CHAPTER VIII

A Spirit from the West

With the people there was something more important at hand than the news of an attempt to rob an inn. The governor had seized and cast into prison the foreigner's servants and his followers. It was said that the governor was waiting for instructions from the capital before putting the Christians to death. The excitement was out of all proportion to the question at stake, as if fiends from our fetish-adorned trees and houses had broken loose, like bats in a warm summer night, filling the air and taking lodgment in the brain of the people. The passion for violence was expressed everywhere.

"Kill the foreigner," they said. "Our children are not safe in our arms. We saw them," the women cried, "with their tiny arms around his neck, smiling in his eyes and chattering with contentment. If with his medicine he can weave a spell over the children like that he will squat over the city like a huge toad and gorge himself with their blood, and their eyes will fill his medicine pot. O, O, O, what will become of us?"

The hysteria of these women reminded me of a similar occasion of which my father often told me,

when a frenzy struck the city of Seoul. It was thought that through some kind of enchantment the children on the streets were made to follow evil men who murdered them. So great was the madness that fathers carrying their own babies were seized and beaten to death. The victims would protest their innocence and appeal to their children for identification. When a child would plead for its father's life the crowd would say, "See, the man has even bewitched the child into believing that he is really its father." The reign of terror was only put down by the use of the military power under the direct order of his Majesty after a vast amount of blood had been shed. When quietness was again secured, the people wondered at their madness. I have since heard that momentary madness has seized towns and cities of other nations and that at one time all France went mad.

I visited the house of the foreigner on the city wall. It had been stoned the night before, and the tiles on the roof were broken and doors torn from their hinges. The wall in places had been torn down and marks of violence were everywhere.

A few years previous to the time of these events a telegraph line had been run through the country. The tall poles looked like a monster from the outside world stalking over the land to bring new and vast changes. The people looked, felt the change, and wondered. In this city a Chinaman sat in the

telegraph office. He seemed to have a sunny side to his nature and welcomed the foreigner, and sent his messages to Seoul, when asked.

The Westerner had just returned from a trip to the telegraph office as I arrived. The people crowded at his heels, but instead of the questions of curiosity that I heard the first time I saw him, sullen silence prevailed; except now and then the utterance of a curse.

I learned that Ho-yongi divided his time with the prison, superintending a system of beating, hoping to secure a squeeze; and, at the house of the foreigner, fawning around him, pretending to be his friend. I went down to the prison. The yard door was open, and with others I entered. Near the door was a man lying on his back, his feet fastened in stocks which were attached high up on the wall, so that his body was raised from the ground and his weight rested only on his shoulders. Ho-yongi soon came with a note from the magistrate and ordered him beaten, but promised his freedom if he would recant and sever his connection with the foreigner. I could not see the man's face, but his words came clear, though spoken in a muffled voice of pain.

"I have told you before the foreigner has no evil practices. His religion is pure. I believe in God and cannot deny him."

Cries proceeded from other parts of the prison where, I was told, Christians were tied up in the

same fashion. Blows were rained upon the feet of the man near the door, yet not a word nor a groan escaped his lips; nothing but the sound of his hard breathing was heard. I turned sick at heart and walked away. If it had not been for Tong-siki I should have thought that the expulsion of the foreigner and Christians the proper thing, but he had put in my heart a feeling of discontent with the old order of cruelty and oppression.

It was rumored again and again that orders were coming from his Majesty demanding the release of these men. Such an order could not be understood. It was contrary to all precedent in the history of our country. Then again it was rumored that orders had come to kill all Christians, and the foreigner also.

Tong-siki was very grave and thoughtful. He visited the prison and talked a great deal with the officials. Of what he heard and saw he said nothing. At times I caught him watching me very closely in a way that made me feel uneasy. On one occasion I defended the Christian in a spirited argument, not because I cared anything for them, but because of one of those perverse moments when one wants to antagonize that for which everybody is clamoring. The effort nearly cost me my hat and topknot. Tong-siki was standing by at the time with his gaze fixed on me, his own face as unfathomable as the face of the image of Buddha.

News came one afternoon that all Christians had been released except the one whose stubbornness had so exasperated his tormentors. His name was Kim. Around this sturdy follower of the new faith had centered all the revilings and miseries of a remorseless persecution. He, it was said, was to be taken to the magistrate and if he refused to recant was to be killed.

"How is it to occur?" I asked Tong-siki, remembering his frequent calls on the magistrate and believing that he knew. He puffed vigorously at his pipe till I felt sure he did not intend to answer, and finally said:

"The Christian who is called Kim is to be taken before the magistrate this mid-afternoon and ordered to recant. If he does not yield it will cost him his life. It is true," he added, "that his Majesty has sent imperative orders to have him released because of representations and protests of foreign consuls at the capital. It is known, however, that powerful members of his cabinet are anxious for a pretext to exterminate all Christians, and it is interpreted here that his Majesty desires the same thing, but is afraid of foreign complications, therefore, the scheme is to publicly order Kim to recant, and when he refuses to release him. Ho-yongi, the Snake, will attend to the rest. What transpires outside of the yamens, of course, will be an accident. May the gods have pity on him who falls a victim to this gentle agent

of justice! I saw him this morning moving among persons of his own character, trying to inflame them against the new religionists.

"Kill!" he was saying, "kill them on sight. He who strikes first will be rewarded by the Emperor."

"Since you have had the courage to go bride hunting and turn robber of a helpless innkeeper, you may have courage to witness the devil at his work. There will be but one victim and the mob will make short work of it. This business of blood-letting has always been a favorite pastime with our people when the odds in numbers against the victim have been sufficiently great to make a heinous crime a simple act of justice, and a thing altogether praiseworthy."

"It is astonishing," he added, after a pause, "the courage these Christians have and their evident fearlessness of death. It is worthy of a good cause, and there is coming a time when we shall look diligently for men of that courage." He hastily rose, as if he had said what he had not intended, and stepping out of the door, turned and said:

"You can get a good view by standing on the elevation at the west of the yamen. I have business away and may not get back in time. Peace to you," he called, and disappeared through the gate of the inn compound.

I soon left for the place he had suggested overlooking the yamen's walls. The walls of the city had taken on a holiday appearance. The white cos-

tumes of the people crowded together against the dark background of the wall, with now and then red, green and yellow glancing in the sunlight, made a scene peculiarly beautiful, and one that could not be duplicated anywhere else in the world. I soon found the place indicated by Tong-siki, and waited. A great crowd of people had gathered around the yamens and stretched back, an eager mass, into the streets toward the city gates, but all was quiet. There was, however, a slow motion, as if the gathering throng, like a stream that had been dammed back, refused to be quiet; but circled and eddied; silent, forceful, ready to break over all barriers to engulf and destroy. The silence seemed more ominous when over the heads of those near the yamen gates were seen poles and clubs carried by men who had discarded their hats and were naked to the waists.

It generally requires some time for a Korean to work himself up to a proper pitch to strike, but when he gets started, he is as blind as a mad bull. A mob even with the carefully premeditated violence is a fickle thing and moves heavily and slowly, and if the intended victim has enough strength left to run, the crowd will be his safety, I thought.

Growing tired of the delay I started down the hill with the purpose of getting nearer to the yamen's gates, and paused now and then to listen to blood-curdling yells that came from the yamen's com-

pound. Someone was being tortured, and the minions of the magistrate were howling like fiends. Just as I had reached a deserted position in a narrow street where I could get a distant view of nothing but a mass of jostling, eager faces, a great stir swept through the people up the narrow street from where I stood.

Suddenly a new tumult arose, and a figure flung into the street in advance of the crowd; barefooted, hair streaming and blood trickling down his face from a wound on the head. This much I noticed as the man ran toward me down the street and passed at my elbow, he turned slightly to the left into what seemed to be a street leading to the city wall, but found himself in one of those tangles of houses and yards that fill our streets as traps for the unwary strangers. I knew that he was fast, and if the mob followed he was doomed. A house jutting out into the street had hid him from the view of a pursuing mob.

It is a curious impulse of our people that when a man is hunted for his life, they join in the race and help run him down. It is not so much from an idea that the fugitive is worthy of violence or death, but there is a passion in our breasts that rises at the sight of blood. It may be that the oppression of the official classes is so great that when the opportunity comes to strike we do it without regard to the guilt or innocency of the victim.

BURDEN BEARERS

The moment I saw the fugitive's face I recognized him as the one concerning whom I had heard so much of late. When the leader of the mob rushed upon me and demanded where the fellow had gone, I put them on the wrong scent.

"In that direction," I said, pointing down a short, narrow street. I watched the mob turn sharply to the right and rush pellmell down the muddy alley way, slipping and sliding as they jostled each other into the gutters in their eagerness to overtake their victim.

Presently Ho-yongi, the mob leader, returned followed by a score of panting followers, hungering for a chance to kill. As they approached, the leader glanced over my head at the hillside and gave vent to a prolonged "A-ah!" expressive of rage and disappointment. I looked and saw the fugitive high up among the rocks of the city wall, well out of the way of pursuit.

Ho-yongi glanced at the footprints, at me, and the fleeing man. His eyes were red with passion, and he thrust his face into mine and shouted. At first his words were too thick for articulation. "You! you did that," he cried at last, "you let that foreigner's devil through a hole in the yard fence and sent us tearing down that street. You—your head is as easily broken as his. Here, you fellows!" he shouted to the mob at his heels, "here is blood for you."

"Hold there!" called a voice at my back, a voice that I recognized and it sounded as sweet as music. Tong-siki was at my side. "What are you about there, Ho-yongi?" he demanded; "Do you know whom you are threatening?"

The mob swayed like a serpent aiming to strike a dodging foe. "Kill!" they shouted, "kill the Christians!" and an evil look darkened the face of Ho-yongi, when they classed us with the fleeing man. But Tong-siki was not a ragged, emaciated victim of the prison, but a man of commanding presence. Beckoning with his hand he called: "News! news from the Emperor! A command. Let the Christian live!" At the sound of that magical name, Emperor, murmurs died out and the mob waited.

"Do you think," Ho-yongi exclaimed, "that the son of the Sung-ji has a right to aid the escape of a criminal regularly condemned by our law?"

"You know the case better than that," Tong-siki replied, "you know that his Majesty ordered the man released, having telegraphed from the capital at the instance of foreign diplomats. Perhaps you are not aware, however, that in saving his life by sending your mob howling down the street this man here has saved your worthless head. Furthermore, it might not be for your interest for me to report what I know concerning you in this matter. Who was it that stirred up the magistrate to put this man in prison? And who is it that has caused his Majesty

to lose prestige in the eyes of foreign diplomats by their repeated demand for the release of that man? When the Emperor's hand falls upon the governor and magistrate, do you think they will shield you?"

The last sentence was addressed at Ho-yongi's back, as he had turned to a comrade to distract attention from Tong-siki's arraignment. He started away a few yards, then suddenly wheeled about and shouted in his nasal voice for all to hear:

"Yes, the Sung-ji's son is an adept at breaking into houses and carrying off young women and opening money boxes. I, too, have a delightful story to tell." Having vented his spleen, he slunk off and the crowd, from which all passion had seemingly gone, parted to let him through.

Tong-siki and I pushed through the crowd and out of the great city gate to the riverside. We walked up the river bank and sat down on one of the rocks that line the shore. Not a word had passed between us since the exciting scenes that had so nearly cost a life, and at one time threatened mine. We sat for some time watching the boats scurrying up and down the river, and listened to the rat-tat-tat of the women washing along the shore. Suddenly my companion turned and said:

"Are you becoming one of them?"

"One of them?" I repeated. "I know nothing about them."

He looked at me steadily for a moment. "Well,"

he said, and I was startled at the strange light in his eyes. It made me think of a smouldering fire, waiting for a breath of wind that it might revel in destruction.

"Well what?" I asked, shrinking from his look.

"To-day you have witnessed an epoch-making scene," he replied. "You did a neat thing when you let that Christian escape, but I half wish you had not done so. There might have been a new order of things if he had fallen. Let me tell you," he continued, waving his hand when I attempted to speak, "my father tells of a scene that he witnessed in this city before you were born. There were Christians in those times and they lived in great insecurity. They held their meetings in out of the way places like a secret society. The priesthood was composed mostly of Europeans who had assumed the Korean costume, and they had learned the language so perfectly that it was difficult to distinguish them from our native people. Now and then, however, in some localities where their numbers had become considerable, they became more open in their religious rites, and in some instances they seemed ready to insist upon their rights. The foreign origin of their religion, the secret character of their gatherings, and the peculiar religious rites of breaking of bread and drinking wine, led the people to believe that they were dangerous to the peace of our land. It was reported that they murdered children, and used their

flesh in their unhallowed religious rites, and committed the most heinous atrocities. Murmurings spread through the country again and again. 'Free the land from these monsters of cannibalism!' was the cry. One day in this very city the father of Hoyongi let loose the dragon of persecution. Early one morning a funeral procession was seen coming down the street. The unusual hour called out many spectators. The hearse had been stripped of all the emblems of our traditions and the spirits had been ignored. In every way it emphatically proclaimed the renunciation of Confucius and Buddha. The carriers moved along in profound silence. There was no shout, cry, or dancing expressive of grief. The gods had been defied, the dead outraged, declared the people. The murmurs became loud with many a curse and invective. A stone was hurled at the bearers, and suddenly a shout rang out above the noise of the scuffling and jostling crowds.

"'Kill the cannibals! kill the cannibals! kill! kill!'

"Instantly the street was in an uproar, and sticks and stones were hurled at the bearers, and they put down their burden. A fury swept through the mob, and they rushed upon the little company of Christians who had quietly taken their stand around the bier of the dead. In less time than it takes to tell the tale every man of that company was beaten to death, and their mangled bodies dragged along the street and out to the river to where we are now sitting and

hurled into the stream. All the demons of our ancestry were turned loose to inflame the people. The nooks and corners where the Christians had taken refuge were searched, and it was astonishing how many of all classes, but mostly of the poor, were dragged into light. Prince Un, then in power, gave orders to exterminate them. The whole land took fire, and the slaughter became furious and indiscriminate. Men, women, and children were drowned, strangled, beheaded, disemboweled, or beaten to death. The country, at last growing weary of the slaughter, adopted milder means and an opportunity was given those apprehended to recant.

"Not the least astonishing part of it was the great number who chose death rather than to renounce their faith." Here the narrator paused, and a noble look came into his face. "Ah!" he added, "those were heroes."

"Why!" I ejaculated, "were the Christians right?"

"I do not know anything about their faith," he replied, "but they chose to suffer for their cause and counted their lives worth little when compared with their principles. There is coming a time when many of our countrymen will be called upon to do acts of sacrifice." Turning suddenly upon me he asked, "Will you be the man to flinch?" The question made me gasp with its abruptness, and without giving me time to reply, he continued: "I said that this has been an epoch-making day. The man who led the mob to-

day is the son of the man whose call 'kill the cannibals,' started that slaughter years ago. He is still living and stood back of his son to urge him on. This day has proven to our country and to the world that a repetition of that scene is impossible. If they had killed the Christian to-day, his Majesty would of necessity have called the governor and the magistrate to account. If blood had been shed, blood would have been shed in return, nor would Ho-yongi have escaped."

"Is that a reason why you would have been willing to have had the Christian killed?" I asked. Tong-siki gave an impatient shrug.

"What do I care about the Snake?" he replied. "He is welcome to live, but if the Christian had fallen it would have recoiled so heavily upon the heads of those in authority that the despotism of our officials would have received a fatal blow, and perhaps before they could recover something permanent might have been done.

"What do you think I saw yesterday when I called at the magistrate's? The way in which these fellows fatten is astonishing. Forty-three yamen runners to one magistrate. Three of them to assist in the duties of the office, and forty to squeeze the people. They had a man stretched out on a cross, stripped half-naked, over him stood a fiendish looking tool of the magistrate with a long paddle in his hand. Opposite on a platform sat the magistrate; in a half-

circle about the victim stood forty runners. As I approached the group the magistrate called out, 'Strike!' All those forty runners howled like so many bloodthirsty demons. The fellow with the paddle leaped into the air, and that instrument of torture came down with a dull thud. As the blows multiplied the poor wretch writhed, and twisted, and strained at the thongs that bound him, insanely calling for mercy. 'Life!' he cried, 'give me life!' His hair was grey with age, but when his mind became confused he called piteously for his mother in the language of a babe. Finally with a shudder and low moan his head lay out upon the cross. The beating stopped, and as they raised him up red drops were on his lips. Recover? Yes, he seemed a vigorous fellow, and perhaps he will, but do you know why they beat him? They beat him because he had been so unfortunate as to raise by dint of a hard summer's toil four sacks of rice more than enough to keep his family through the winter, and had refused to give it over to the magistrate on demand. He will give it now, as they have beaten all strength of resistance out of him.

"You call yourself a citizen? This is a land of slaves. I have visited the soil of other nations, and when I have seen their homes I have blushed for shame over the memory of my poverty-stricken countrymen. We are like rats that burrow into the first hole that promises shelter from the cold and wet.

Our homes are as naked as the limbs of a willow tree after the frosts and winds of winter have swept it bare. Ther is not an article of furniture nor of adornment found in any home of our twelve millions except a few of those of rank and of wealth. There is not a man that lies down to sleep to-night in all this land that is sure that the yamen runners will not wake him with a demand for his living. Fools they are! They fatten on us by destroying us.

"Your father has some influence and enjoys security because of his rank and the king's favor. You have some security because of your father, and I because I am his friend, but when he dies all he has gathered will vanish like the morning dew. Inside of thirty days you will be as poor as the fox. Do not think you will escape the cross.

"If you should lose all, how would you live?" he added, glancing at my thin hands and long, carefully tended finger nails.

"Confucius calls upon us to honor and obey those in authority. I often wonder if that sage was under the paddle what would be his philosophy. We knock our heads on the floor and fawn to those above us, and while they stroke us, they examine our fur to see if we are worth flaying. We know that they love ours, not us, and while they prepare the knife we lick their hands.

"Are the official class fools, did I say? We are, if we submit to this intolerable injustice and cruelty."

CHAPTER IX

Perils of the Great Tong River

"How much did you say?"

"One hundred yang."

"One hundred y-a-n-g?"

"That is little enough. Five men for five days. Only four yang a day for each man."

Daylight was just creeping into my room, and I recognized Tong-siki's voice engaged in one of those word duels with a river boatman whose service he wished to secure at a reasonable rate, and I recognized in the boatman's voice a determination that he would not be reasonable.

I glanced out of the door at the speaker. He stood bareheaded, without shoes, his trousers rolled half way up to his knees, a cloth carelessly tied around his head for a hat, a long pipe in his mouth, shrewdly calculating on the probable wealth of his would-be patrons. Seemingly satisfied that we could pay a good price, he squatted down with his back half turned to Tong-siki, with seemingly absolute indifference to whether we engaged him or not.

"Mine is the only unengaged boat on the river," he muttered, as if addressing his pipe. "However,

if they don't want to pay my price they may get some kind of a tub in a few days."

"Seventy-five yang," said Tong-siki.

"Huh," was the reply, "think I will be going." He knocked the tobacco out of his pipe with great deliberation, stood up, yawned, and gave his trousers a vigorous hitch upward, as if he had some idea of lifting himself over the wall by his waistbands, and without looking back, walked leisurely through the gate and off down the street.

Fifteen minutes later we were hustling the innkeeper off to the river to look for another boat proprietor, but at that juncture the departing man returned and, thrusting his face through the gate, laconically called, "Eighty-five yang."

"Seventy," replied Tong-siki.

The man swung away and timed his return to the river to meet the innkeeper.

"Seventy-five yang," said the innkeeper.

"The boat will be here in a few moments," was the ready reply.

Notwithstanding the promise and assurances, oft-repeated, that the boat would be ready to leave in an hour, we counted ourselves fortunate on finding our boat moving northward after sunrise the next day.

The season was rapidly approaching the rainy period, and we left with some apprehension as to the success of our voyage. The wind, however, blew steadily from the northwest, and we hoped to escape

the storm. The party consisted of the same persons who made the trip down. Never before did our retinue of servants seem so useless. While in the city we had no time for occasions requiring the talents of our dancing girls, neither had we entertained persons of rank. We found the city unique in its peculiar social equality. Everyone, while possessing an inborn reverence for rank, demanded treatment of equality from everyone else.

Beyond the city wall is the site of the ancient city, long since deserted. Great roads stretch in every direction, without houses, like a huge skeleton without muscle or sinew, staring at one out of the past. The communities are gathered here and there in small houses, bunched together like a few remaining teeth in a grinning skull. There live the aristocracy of the North, and they occupy a realm of their own. It is said that a resident within the walls may walk the streets with his outside neighbor and expect to be addressed in terms of equality, but as soon as the two companions step through the gate into the neighborhood of the aristocracy, the city man must expect to be addressed in terms of an inferior.

The democratic spirit that prevailed in the city removed the temptation of patrician conviviality requiring entertainment on the part of our company. Also the stirring scenes of our visit had engrossed all our attention and feelings.

I sat under the awning of our boat and leisurely

watched the boatmen, their bronze bodies naked to the waist, working our boat through the tangle along the shore. Again and again we ran afoul the boat-racks of other crafts which were piled high, like strawstacks, with brush for fuel so eagerly purchased by the city to be burned under their house floors. Out we glided into the stream, the oarsmen took their places, and we began the five days' trip homeward.

The sun, tempered by a light breeze and the gliding motion of the boat, gave one a feeling of rest and gratefulness. Gradually, however, like the memory of a painful dream, the vision of my future hunchback bride, as I saw her under the light in the inn, crowded upon my mind. Was it the face of an idiot? or did the shadows of the inn magnify her deformity?

I remember a tradition told me when a child of a youth seeking his bride who was suffering under the power of a certain magician. On meeting her she appeared a maiden of surpassing beauty and spirit-like loveliness, but later, when the glamour of their honeymoon was over, he noted changes in her that startled him; something in her face that suggested more of the animal than of an angel. Finally he accidentally discovered her bathing in the river, no longer a beautiful maiden, but a dragon, loathsome, slimy, revolting, terrible. The shock that I experienced was something of that character. I re-

volted with all my nature, but the custom of obedience to parents bound me in chains of iron. I had not the slightest doubt that within the next month I should be joined for life to that creature.

An hour after leaving the city landing the boatmen had worked our way up the first rapids, to the end of the island that lay like a long boat moored in the center of the river. They had been towing up the stream like horses on the tow path, but on reaching this point they clambered into the boat, and, pushing off from the shore, bent to their oars, holding the prow up against the current. Thus the current assisted in carrying us across; but we landed far below the point from which we started on the opposite side. This method of crossing the river under usual circumstances is safe, but when the floods are high, the water demons it is said know no pity.

As the boatmen climbed out and adjusted the ropes to their shoulders, Tong-siki broke the silence that he had maintained from the start.

"Well," said he; "what will you do with her?"

"Do?" I repeated, "what would you do?"

"Kill her," he sententiously replied.

I knew that Tong-siki was not a man of violence, and looked for his meaning.

"Of course I don't mean break her head, but simply don't do it. Don't marry her."

"But my father's fortunes are depleted, and shame and disgrace threaten the Sung-ji. You, as his

steward, have told me that he has lost nearly all his influence at the royal court. You know he has wasted vast sums on the greedy officials at the capital with the only return of empty promises. Will not the union with this family replenish his fortunes?"

Tong-siki looked at me for some time without replying. Finally he said: "These are times of great events, national changes are at hand, great men are demanded, men who are ready to sacrifice, men who count their lives not dear to themselves, but that they may do something for their country. We must have representatives of the most powerful and influential families to form the nucleus of a reform party. Your father is old and bound to the traditions of old Korea. The system that made him great and rich is as dear to him as his life. Your brother has received petty rank, and hopes vainly for more. The sluggish stream of the dead past flows through their veins. If you marry this woman you will be forced by the combined influences of these two patrician families along the same lines. Her father has promised a large property; your father has promised political aid, which he cannot give. You are the binding link between the two, and you will be in the vortex of an endless family intrigue. I have watched you closely for the last five years, and found that you can think and act independently. The day after your marriage to that creature you will find that

the ancestry of both families, dead men that they are, will hang upon your neck. The law of custom will order your life, and you will be the facsimile of any one of the hordes of our people that follow the routine taught them by oppressive laws, customs and belief. Is the woman hunchback and imbecile? Her form will be a model of beauty, and her mind a gem of brilliancy, compared with the deformed and besotted future that life itself will be to you."

Tong-siki, while speaking low, spoke with great vehemence.

"O!" he added, after a pause, "I see you don't understand. I should have presented the matter differently. You are familiar, in a measure, with the Boxer movement to better the conditions of the people. They expect to secure the coöperation of such a mass of people that they will be able to march unhindered to the capital and establish a new order of things. What think you that order would be? It would be as much worse than the present, as they are beneath the present rulers in knowledge and experience. They want a reform of force; but when I want a secretary I don't employ an ox because he has an abundance of muscle. My idea is that every government is on the whole as good as the individual citizen. Reform there must be, but it must come through the families of the nobles. I have dreamed of a great school of our families of rank studying law and justice, and administering for the happiness

of the people. You, Sung-yo," he added, "as a representative of the great Sung-ji's clan, are in a position to take the initiative for the North country, and aid in making our country what it was in the early ages the—the arbiter of civilization and a blessing to the world."

Tong-siki delivered his appeal with all the earnestness of his soul, while the hunger in his eyes deepened as he waited for my answer.

I had turned my face down the stream waiting for an inspiration to form a reply to an appeal that had bewildered me with its vehemence. Looking back I met his gaze full upon me.

"You spoke beyond my comprehension," I at last replied. "If you are counting upon my readiness to do something for our people you have not misjudged me, but the extent of your idea is bewildering."

All day long we sat apart from the rest, and he told me the story of his hopes and plans, and I was astonished at the extent of the information that he possessed. He talked to me as one of the sages. He told the story of our country's wrongs; he pictured the miseries of our common people living under an intolerable system of intrigue and exploitation; he told me the story of our ancient greatness and pictured what we might be in glowing colors; he pleaded for manhood that would suffer for the right with gladness. His travels had made him believe that the powers of the world were reaching out after

new fields for exploitation, and that unless Korea speedily shook herself loose from the past and took on new life her doom was close at hand.

As the days of our journey slipped by a new conception of affairs took form and grew within me, and I found myself asking the question, "Am I destined to become a rebel to his Majesty and the government that now is?" I had reached no decision, but was thinking. The third day on our return, Tong-siki smiled to see me slip off my delicate deerskin shoes and put on rough straw sandals, and when I cut my long finger nails, he seemed satisfied. But there were other events coming in rapid succession that hurled me out of the old social caste into a life of which even Tong-siki had not dreamed.

During the afternoon of the third day the wind changed to the southeast, and the sky took on a yellow cast. While there were no clouds, the sun shone through the mist with difficulty, and in the mid-afternoon seemed like a red ball in the sky. The boat-men became uneasy. "Looks like the rainy season," they said.

That night when we tied up to the river bank the light cotton covering was replaced by heavy swamp-grass mats. In the morning we arose late, being deceived in the time by the darkness that prevailed. It was believed that the summer rains threatened us. We resolved, however, to push on and make home before the river could rise sufficiently to make boat-

ing dangerous. A sail helped us much, and on reaching the rapids our servants joined the boatmen waist-deep in the stream, lifting and tugging cheerfully. When night came again we found ourselves so far from any village or friendly inn that we decided to remain on the boat, and, too, it was believed that by starting at dawn home could be reached before noon of the next day. We made fast to the shore at both the prow and stern, and stretched the mat covering tight and fastened it down.

I was awakened at the first cockcrow by the shout of the boatmen as they tugged at our craft to resecure it farther up the bank. Rain was falling. We were sheltered behind a line of hills and there seemed to be little wind, but the rain came down in torrents and the roar was deafening. A stream of water found its way through the mats, and trickled down on my face. Hastily lighting a candle, I found my companions sitting up and gazing overhead, vainly trying to locate leaks in the roof. We smoothed the mats and readjusted them, but the deluge found an increasing number of holes. Finally we piled our effects in heaps and sat upon them, and covered ourselves with oiled-paper umbrellas. Soon the wind swept up the river and attacked the flaps of our mat roof. A sheet of rain drove the length of the boat and put out the light. The boatmen crawled in, shivering with wet, and tried to fasten the flaps down. Thus we watched until morning struggled through

the storm. Then the boatmen reported that the river was rising rapidly, and demurred about continuing the journey, but on the promise of a reward agreed to push on immediately. While our servants started a charcoal fire and prepared the morning meal, they, loosing the boat, harnessed themselves into the ropes and started to tow upstream, accompanying their efforts by the usual chant "Oi-ha, oi-ha." The rainfall was astonishing, deluging everything. Torrents poured down the mountainside, a roaring cataract from the frowning cliffs. After breakfast our servants added their weight to the ropes. About midforenoon Tong-siki joined them, leaving the dancing girls and myself the only occupants of the boat. Finally, reaching a high cliff that stood perpendicular to the water's edge, we were compelled to row across the stream. Ordinarily at this point the river is quiet, and the feat easily accomplished. Now, however, it was a great flood, and when we had arrived at the other bank we had drifted a half mile down stream. The question of continuing the journey was again debated, but as the present landing was exposed to the wind that had now become furious, we decided to push on. At the end of an hour's tugging at the ropes we found ourselves confronted with a wall of rocks running along the river at a distance of one thousand feet. Our present position was made perilous by a bend in the river forcing the current to the point we occupied. Fastening our supply

of ropes together, one was made about three hundred feet in length; and two of the boatmen carried it up the face of the cliff and out on a spur of rock which extended into the stream some distance farther than where our boat lay. They clung to the rocks, while the wind and rain seemed at times on the point of sweeping them into the gulf fifty feet below. They made fast and signalled for us to pull. Two of our number began reeling in the rope, while others with long poles kept the craft from the rocks. The mat covering to the boat had been entirely discarded, having been pulled down to facilitate the movements of the boatmen. The two dancing girls huddled together under heavy mats in the center of the boat. The sides of the boat were only eighteen inches above water, and as the current swept down upon us we were in constant danger of being swamped, so the dancing girls were called upon to bail. They presented a ludicrous appearance with the paint streaked about their faces and necks, and their gaudy clothing, the colors all intermingling, clinging to them, but no one thought of laughing. By prodigious effort we reached the projection where the rope was fastened, and on looking from that point found there was another sweep inward and a projection of rock, carrying the shore in a half circle still farther in the middle of the stream. The cliff overhead seemed to present a smooth face, impossible to climb beyond the spur where our boatmen stood. We watched a

debate taking place between the men on the spur, who finally, leaving the rope fastened on the rock, made their way back by a zig-zag course down to our boat. They declared that in the storm it would be impossible to climb the face of the cliff, and with a rope tied to a man's waist the feat was beyond a moment's consideration.

The river was rising rapidly, and we had spent an hour in the first movement. Another hour and it would be impossible to cross the stream beyond the ledge, while to remain in that current would be the loss of the boat with its freight. This information was imparted by shouts, as the storm made ordinary conversation impossible. I had already noted a thundering sound that seemed to proceed from the depths of the mountain. It came with rhythmic precision and with seeming acceleration. Tong-siki and I made our way around the projection of rock in front till we saw where it shelved inward half way up the cliff, and at the edge of the water opened up a great cavern in the mountainside. From the cavern burst upon us a thunderous roll of contending powers within. It was as if the artillery of the gods had been arrayed in contending armies. The water in front foamed and eddied, and hissing like a huge serpent with raised crest, plunged down the throat of the roaring cavern, then recoiled, broken into thousands of shining atoms, and fell murmuring at the foot of the cliff. Then followed the cannonading

that seemed to shake the rock on which we stood. We watched the river again gather her forces and hurl herself into the face of the mountain, then again listened to its riotous roar and thunder. Finally, turning to make our way back to the boat, we were met by a white and trembling boatman. He had been looking into the cavern and his teeth chattered with terror.

"The water demon! we are lost! I-go-o!" he wailed.

Tong-siki seized him by the shoulder, shook him and stood him on his feet with fierce imprecations. Then we ran back to the boat, and Tong-siki stood some minutes intently surveying the cliff. Finally he singled out one of the boatmen and shouted something in his ear, then, taking up a coil of light rope, they started up the spur and reached the rock where the rope was fastened. Tong-siki proceeded to fasten it around his waist, and motioned to those below to pay out the slack. The boatmen remained at this point to haul up the rope, and make it as light as possible for Tong-siki, who began to climb the face of the cliff. From where we stood he seemed but a white blotch on the face of the rocks. He moved slowly, feeling his way, seizing the projection of a rock here and another there, then, pausing to balance himself, he pulled the rope up after him and deposited the slack on a rocky projection, then again moved on. Sometimes he came to a halt and would wait a full

minute motionless, and we would hold our breath, wondering if he had given up, or if he had grown dizzy, and would lose his hold to be plunged into the boiling flood a hundred feet below. Occasionally a gust of wind would sweep up across the face of the cliff, mercilessly pelting the clinging man and almost hiding him from our view in the torrent of rain. At such times he would cling motionless to the face of the rock, and when the force of the wind had momentarily spent itself, move on and then halt again.

Suddenly, above the noise of the river and the storm, a roar broke upon us.

The mountains of this section of the country are very precipitous, and are usually as bare of covering as the face of a rock, the heavy rains of summer having washing them clean of every particle of soil. Some years, however, the rains of summer are light and allow a growth on the mountainsides. Such had been the summers for the last decade, and extended green slopes met and gladdened the eyes everywhere. Occasionally the soil that had so collected would be caught by a freshet and swept down the mountainside, accumulating in material until rocks and bowlders, breaking loose, form a landslide of appalling magnitude, and thundering down the mountain, fill the valley with debris. Such was now taking place. Far up on the mountain, a mile away, the movement had begun and was roaring down upon us.

I looked at Tong-siki. He had heard it and was

gazing upward. Twenty feet of rock still towered above him. He could not have moved a yard from where he stood before the coming shock would be upon him. We, in the boat, were rooted to where we stood, while on came the landslide, roaring and thundering, as if worlds were in conflict. Suddenly a huge bowlder, as if hurled by some mighty power from the mountain, shot out from the cliff some fifty yards in advance of where Tong-siki stood. A fusillade of rock followed and the mountain trembled, then a great yellow mass rolled and tumbled in mid-air, shutting out the view of sky, plain, and river in our front. The river sprang up and seemed to meet the falling mountain. Dust, sand, and fragments of stone dashed into our boat and around us. Following the echo of the falling rock, a huge wave carried us high up on the side of the rocks and left us on a smooth ledge, partly submerged.

At the appearance of the falling rock, we had instinctively ducked our heads and seized the sides of the boat. The act saved us from being washed overboard. I looked around at my companions. One of the dancing girls was still clinging to the side with blanched face and chattering teeth, gazing at something in the stream. I looked—a bright, red garment floated for a moment, was caught in an eddy and a delicate hand swung aloft, then disappeared. The rest of our party stood halfway to the waist in water, but safe. I looked for Tong-siki, but for full five

minutes the cloud of dust, in spite of the beating rain, whirled and eddied over the front of the cliff, then a white patch was seen. There he stood, still looking upward. The overhanging rock had saved his life, and as I watched I marveled that he did not move on. A moment later I saw the reason. Beyond him, to the left, a muddy stream was pouring over the cliff. At the top it shot out from the face of the rock, large and threatening; but before reaching the river it seemed to be lost in the pouring rain. To return would mean death to us all, and no one knew this better than he. We all waited with suspended breath for his decision. If he should attempt to pass under the stream, and the wind should hurl it against the face of the rock, it would sweep him off like a pebble. We saw him with infinite care remove the rope from around his waist and hang it loosely from his shoulder, that he might release it in case of a blow from the stream. He gathered the slack rope to the place where he stood, then moved slowly upward, safely under the stream, and beyond to the top of the ledge, then a great sob broke from our lips.

We were called to action by the chief boatman pointing out marks of rapidly rising water, and under his direction we all climbed out on the ledge with the purpose of releasing the boat, but it did not float. The rock pointed upward from the face of the mountain, and the edge of the shelf thrust farthest in the river was the highest. Following the boat-

man's orders, we all stood out on the extreme edge of the rock, and, assisted by the current, lifted the boat partly on its side and thus slightly emptied it, so that when we released our hold it floated. Two of our number took off their coats, and holding both ends, used them to bail out the water. At last, a gourd was fished out from beneath the planking over the bottom and the task finished. Already the man stationed on the spur overhead was signalling by vigorous pulls on the rope to move ahead. Beyond him, far out on the next projection, stood Tong-siki with the rope fastened, quietly waiting for us.

As I looked at him, standing silently in the distance, somewhere down in the soul—where instinct is untrammeled by sophistry or prejudice, where thoughts are feelings and years of mental toil are the efforts of a moment—I gave him my life. He who could conquer the cliff could conquer men and lead men. From that moment he led me.

Our task was only begun. The poles for handling the boat had, with all else, been swept away. When the boat swung around into position, it was noticed that the small skiff we had tied to the stern had broken loose and had become wedged in between two rocks. The stern swung back and forth with the current, pausing now and then, as if on the point of breaking loose.

The men at the front of our craft began reeling in the rope, while others unshipped the oars and planted

them against the rock, pushing with all their strength to keep the boat out in the stream. Slowly, we moved forward around the point. Occasionally the current would drive us up into the rocks with a force that threatened to crush the boat. By prodigious effort, we would work her off again; then the men at the rope would pull with frantic energy, gaining a foot, then again we would be hurled back on the rocks. The repeated blows soon opened a leak in the bottom, and one of our number gave his whole time bailing the water. At last our craft crawled away from the rocky projection and swung loose into a bay-like formation, that curved into the cave. The water had risen since Tong-siki and I had worked our way around the rocks and looked at the cave, and the subterranean cannonading had increased. It thundered and bellowed with appalling force, and our boatmen's faces blanched with superstitious fear. The landslide had partially filled a portion of the river beyond us, sending a flood in the direction of the cave. Our craft struggled and plunged as the current swept it from side to side. The long sweep at the stern had been lost, and our efforts with the paddles made slight impression in the effort to keep her steady. Again and again we seemed on the point of being engulfed. I had struggled persistently with one of the oars, and my hands were blistered and bleeding, but I did not notice it then. Suddenly a yell from one of the boatmen caused us all to look

up the river. A dark mass, reaching from shore to shore, was bearing down upon us with frightful velocity. In appearance it was a wave three feet high bearing a light crest that boiled and foamed, and seemed to sweep in advance of the oncoming mass. I heard shouts about me, but stood stupefied. Somewhere up the river a cloudburst was sending its flood down upon us. On it came, and I had a faint impression that our boat was moving rapidly shoreward under the renewed efforts of our men. It seemed as if but a breath had passed, from the time we first saw the flood until it struck the obstruction in the river above us, formed by the recent landslide. The spray sprang into the air, hiding the river for a moment, giving one the impression that there had been a pause, but instantly the water had divided and part plunged through the narrow channel toward us with increased velocity. The monster rose at our side and instantly I was in the water. Instinctively I held my breath, and it seemed that I would never come to the surface. I was conscious of being carried along with the current, and wondered if it were to the mouth of the cave. When my head shot above the surface, I had already been carried outside the point. What a distance the boat seemed away! It had the appearance of having swung sidewise to a rocky wall, to which the occupants were clinging. I caught only a glimpse of it and was swept onward. I strove to keep my head above water, hoping that the current

would carry me in to the shore. The skiff had been lifted out of the rocks and carried shoreward and was circulating in an eddy, as if traveling upstream. The gentleness with which it rode on the surface seemed to mock me in my struggles as I swept by. Some distance ahead of me was a line of rocks projecting from the shore. The current seemed kind and bore me directly upon the last bowlder, which rose full a foot above the flood. I seized a projection of the rock, and was flung like a cork to the opposite side. I closed my teeth and strained to pull myself forward on the stone. The torrent poured around both sides, meeting at my waist, and after a moment's desperate struggle, it tore my hands loose and hurled me farther into the stream. Immediately a dark object loomed up at my side; instinctively I grabbed for it, and found my hand grasping the side of our lost skiff. I was too exhausted to do more than to cling to its side as we swept on downstream. Finally, I felt my way to the stern of the skiff.

Swimming had been the one athletic sport of which I was fond, and the practice came to good purpose now. Tong-siki and I had often turned a skiff loose and tried the feat of climbing aboard without upsetting it. It took me a long time, but I finally accomplished the feat. Now, however, I was greatly at a disadvantage. The boat was in rapid motion and my strength exhausted. When I had reached the stern, I worked the skiff until it pointed directly

with the current. With hands on both sides, I began a teetering motion, that as the skiff sank would bring my waist out of the water, intending to throw myself across the stern. Repeatedly the current seized the boat and threw it sidewise to the stream, compelling me to slide back into the water. At last I lay exhausted in the bottom of the boat.

Looking back I could see nothing of the place where the disaster had overtaken us. Even the mountain was hid from view by intervening hills. I bailed the water out of the boat by sopping it up with my coat, and wringing the garment over the side. The river, which forty-eight hours ago, was a quiet, harmless stream, had become a raging flood. How fast it flowed! I was in constant danger of being dashed against ragged rocks near shore. Several times I held my breath, expecting the boat to be crushed like an eggshell, then the current would swing me clear and hurl the skiff in the middle of the river. Down these rapids I went like a race horse. The hills danced by, as if the whole transaction was a merry game. Finally I noted a turn of the stream, where the mountains recede and the banks are comparatively low. The flood had stretched out across the plain, and it presented the appearance of a great lake. I leaned over the side of the boat and tried to paddle it out upon the quieter water of the plain. Just as I thought I had gained my point, I found it slowly drifting back into the rapid current.

Out in midstream floated a house with a man astride the roof. He shouted to me to come and help him. A donkey struggled in the current, his head laid out on the water with his long ears floating back, as if they were too heavy to be longer supported. Other houses there were, some rootless, others breaking up. On one roof were several half-drowned chickens, among them a rooster trying to crow.

Along the banks of the river everywhere, people had gathered to watch the flood, but none dared to venture out upon it. I gave up all attempts to work the boat ashore, and gave my efforts to keeping off from the rocks. By moving suddenly from one end to the other and by rocking the skiff vigorously, I was able sometimes to change the direction; thus I often avoided being shattered on these ragged foes. Finally, the skiff shot out into the broad river, where it is met by a branch from the south. The danger of rocks became much less, and an hour later I was opposite the city of Pyeng-Yang. The flood had swept the shore clear of its many houses, and the place, where a few days ago the people jostled each other in trade, was ten feet under water. My skiff rode level with the city streets, and I could look through the gates upon flooded streets as I swept by. Great effort was being made to save property. A man sculling a skiff darted out on the stream, seized a stick of floodwood and scurried back to shore. I

called to him for help. He looked at the river a moment and started. I was already some distance below him, but he gained on me rapidly until he struck the center of the current. Either he became exhausted or the flood appalled him. He fumbled with the paddle and drifted. Recovering himself, he started back for the shore and reached it a long distance below the city. I called again for help, but he gazed after me in silence.

Night came on. The rain had ceased and the wind died out. How dark it grew! I could scarcely see the water over the sides of the boat, until at last absolute darkness prevailed. On the boat glided with merciless persistency, on toward the great sea. It seemed as if the vindictive demons of the cave had seized my boat and were urging it on to hurl it upon some sunken rock, or at last, when weary of the wild frolic, overwhelm me in the flood. I had been on a physical and mental strain all day, and had fought with death continually since mid-afternoon, and had eaten nothing since morning. I was utterly exhausted, and as I leaned forward over the prow, staring into the inky blackness ahead, a thousand fancies darted through my brain. The foolish superstitions of our race, familiar to me from childhood, filled my mind with gruesome forms; unnatural light sparkled before my eyes, and the ghoulish laughter of water demons echoed around my boat, while overhead I heard the sighs and moans of departed

spirits. I lay shivering with the cold and my foolish terrors. How long I had ridden in the dark in this state of mind, I do not know, when suddenly I felt a great shock and a sharp blow across my back. I sprang up to a sitting position and found my head in the limbs of a tree. My first thought, after awakening from my fright, was that I had run into overhanging limbs from shore, but on a moment's reflection I concluded, from the absence of much commotion in the water, that the tree must be floating, and so it proved. I welcomed the encounter as it drove from me the terrors of the water. I pushed the boat out from it, and tried to circle the floating mass, and had crept nearly the length of the tree by reaching over the end of the skiff and working from limb to limb—when the tree turned partly over. Suddenly a scream, half human, half animal, filled me with panic and I lost my hold. There was a scramble in the branches and something landed in my boat, splashing the water over my face, and scurried to the opposite end, then all was silent. The skiff glided on. "What was that?" I asked myself, with all my terrors returning. I dared not investigate, and sat in the further end of the skiff. I had been taught from infancy to believe profoundly in demons and their wanton pranks on men, and through the hours of the longest night of my life, I sat staring at the blackness that hid the opposite end of the boat. Sometimes, by a slight breeze, I was conscious of

riding backwards or sidewise to the current, but I did not turn my gaze from the front. Sometimes I imagined I saw a dark, silent figure rise up out of the boat and expanding to gigantic proportions, lean toward me, yet I dared not cry out. If I could only hear something, a hiss, a cry, or a roar; but the silence remained unbroken, except the sound of water as it danced around my boat.

With what joy I welcomed the first gray light that showed me my hands when I held them to my eyes, then the boat around where I sat. Eagerly I peered into the other end, but there was nothing. The light increased and I rubbed my eyes and looked again, then crawled on hands and knees to the other end of the boat, and carefully looked at the seat where my supposed spectre companion had sat during the night. Then two small, gray eyes gazed curiously back at me from under the seat. On second examination, I recognized my companion as a house cat that I had unintentionally rescued from the flood.

Fog had settled down upon the river, and I was unable to see two lengths of the boat. In utter exhaustion I threw myself full length in the boat and was lost in sleep. How long I lay there I do not know, but when I awoke the fog was still covering the water like a heavy blanket. A rhythmic rise and fall of the boat startled me. I tried to rise to look about, but at first was too stiff and sore to move. Something warm against me caused me to look

down. There lay my companion, curled up to keep warm. She was breathing contentedly with a soft, whispering purr, and I was glad. I painfully sat up and noted carefully the water about the boat, tasted it and concluded, as it afterwards proved, that we were in the swells of the sea.

I was still at the mouth of the estuary and the tide was running out. Hours later the fog lifted and a light wind from the north set in. The sun, which came struggling through the mist, seemed to indicate mid-afternoon. I could look back upon the distant shores with their towering mountains standing out in strong, rugged relief against the sky. How near they seemed! yet it would have taken hours to reach them, though I had been provided with sails. I hoped that the incoming tide would drive the skiff within reach of the shore. As far as I could see there were no fishermen on the bay. The recent storm had driven them all ashore.

Again night was upon me, and the wind had died out. I watched the stars as they came out one by one, and it seemed at one time that I was drifting shoreward, but, soon to my dismay, the fog settled so heavily that I might have drifted within an arm's length of shore "without knowing it." My companion curled up against me and gave vent to her discontent by soft mews, and I wondered if she was as thirsty as I was. I never look back to those days and nights of burning thirst that I do not

wonder why the magistrates do not adopt that plan of torture, instead of the paddle, for nothing could be more excruciating. I tore up the covering of the bottom of my boat. A quart or more of rain water had settled there, but when I eagerly stooped to drink it, I found it brackish. Sea water had seeped into the boat and mingled with it, and my thirst raged worse than before, having swallowed up all other sense of feeling and caused me to forget hunger. Through the night I lay on the bottom of the boat, sometimes half asleep, but always tortured. Along towards morning I called repeatedly, and an echo came from the shore and I knew that I was near land. I called till my parched lips refused to respond to my effort. When the light dawned the fog had lifted and rain again threatened. One tide had come in and had carried me near shore, and another was now bearing me out to sea again.

As I noted the movement away from shore, a feeling of stupefaction came over me. I noticed, but indifferently, that the boat took a direction toward a large island lying parallel to the shore. It seemed to my imagination but a shadow in the distance. We people of the East are charged with being fatalists. Perhaps my experience bears out that idea, for I had simply given up. I leaned up against the side of the boat and looked across at the cat. She sat there looking in my face, her feet braced before her like

the half feline images fronting the palace in our capital. I could not get my gaze from her, and a pain ran up the back of my head and spread out all over the top. The cat's head seemed to grow large and fill up all the space in front of me. I thought I would strike out at it, then it receded until it was but a speck in the far distance, and the boat seemed to stretch away from me. Somehow I got an idea that the other end of the boat had started for the shore and the tiny cat on the end seemed such a funny thing. I swung my arms and laughed. A wine song with which our dancing girls had often entertained us echoed through my brain; I thought I was singing it, perhaps I did try. At last I came to myself again and found that I had been lying on my back with my face skyward and the rain pouring down upon me. I rose and looked around. The cat had taken refuge under the seat, and I felt dizzy, but everything seemed to have regained their normal proportions. The wind had risen and again threatened the skiff. I laid on my back and tried to catch the rain drops in my mouth. All feeling in my tongue had gone, and it seemed like a billet of wood. The shore was far away. On the seaward side the island was much nearer, and the boat was running along at a merry rate.

The island pointed at a slight angle with the shore, so that the west end swung seaward and the returning tide, finding less control at that end, slipped

away, drawing after it, as it were, the great surface of water from out between the east end of the island and the distant shore. The boat was approaching the island, and I was in doubt whether we would take the sea or the channel side. I tried to watch our progress, but light danced before my eyes and made the effort painful.

Glancing around, I saw the cat licking the raindrops from the seat. It gave me an idea, and I took off my coat and spread out the center on the seat and gathered the sides in a circle to form a dish. The rain came down heavily, and I was able to moisten my mouth and feel the water trickle down my throat. When I looked again, we were drifting rapidly toward the inside of the island, and two hours later we were beside the east end, about a mile off shore. Then there came a pause in the movement of the tide, and I knew it would not be long before it would start back, carrying me toward shore, and then, probably, on the ebb deposit the skiff somewhere out in the open sea. The wind, fortunately, seemed to have spent itself, so that up to the present, since I had been on the sea, there had been little wind, but such a state could not last, especially as it was now in the midst of our rainy season. As far as I could see, not a soul inhabited the island. It was as silent as the bare face of a cliff, as indeed it appeared to be. Now and then, however, a green spot seemed to stretch down to the water's edge, and the green min-

gled with the sea, but the general appearance was forbidding and lifeless. A desire to live brought back my strength, and I reached over the boat, trying with my hands to urge it shoreward. Heavy swells were setting in, and I could not tell whether I was getting nearer or not. For a moment my boat would pause on the top of a huge swell, then scud into a valley with the water towering above me. Long I worked without looking up. When I did, the shore seemed as far away as ever. As I settled back in the boat, exhausted, a faint object glistened on the water some distance westward. It proved to be a stick which had been swept from shore during the storm. I watched it rise on a wave, it seemed to move towards me, then the wave would sink and the stick scud away. In drifting down the river, I had passed scores of pieces of wood nearer than this one, but they had all eluded my grasp. As hopeless as it seemed—my eyes were riveted to that bit of floating wood.

The swells rose and fell and the distance lessened between me and it; then I realized that the tide had slowly started back and the idea of being again swung like a pendulum between the shore and the sea, and finally engulfed by the first wave maddened by the coming wind, was appalling. Using my hands for a paddle, I again struggled to lessen the distance between me and the floating stick. The wind was freshening from the east, and held me up against the

tide, and after an hour's labor the stick was one wave length away. It rose on the crest of the wave, and I leaned across the prow and reached frantically for it. The boat dipped water and the stick fell away with the receding wave. Again it rose nearer, while the boat swung around and balanced on the crest of the wave. For a moment, the wind seemed on the point of driving me past it. Again I flung myself across the prow and the boat partly filled, but my fingers closed over the stick. I have experienced many narrow escapes on sea and land, but I never experienced such a thrill of joy as I did when I felt my fingers closing over the end of the rough pole. It was crooked and round, but I felt that I could win my way to the land. Bailing out the boat once more, I headed it shoreward and laughed to find it under my control.

As I approached the island I noticed a long gray line of sand stretching seaward from the shore and ending in a black fringe of mud, over which the breakers rolled in huge, threatening billows. Soon I was in the current of the tide running toward the island. The wind was rising, but had not yet made the sea choppy. I was borne aloft on the crest of a huge swell and then shot into the trough of the wave; then, again, the next swell would bear me aloft and, pausing like an athlete, hurl me farther landward. Presently a roar came from the narrow strip of sand and fear chilled me, but death there

was better than the open sea, and I waited for the time when the final struggle should begin.

The cat climbed upon my shoulder and out on the prow, balanced herself against the motion of the boat and sniffed the air, then yowled with a prolonged cry of mingled fear and discontent and hid for a moment under the seat; then again walked the boat.

We paused on the last wave, and I worked the pole furiously. Forward the boat shot into the surf, and I was out into the seething foam, clinging to a bowlder. Glancing back, a black mass of water towered above me, coming on with foaming crest, a monster furious and confident. I plunged ahead, and was instantly borne forward and hurled into the sand and beaten down. As the wave receded, I gained a foothold and paused. A hand from somewhere reached me and I struggled out of the way of the next incoming wave.

When I came to myself, I was stretched out on the sand, and the surf thundered at my feet.

"Water!" I called, and soon a gourd was placed in my hand and pressed to my lips. I was aware of a pair of dark eyes watching me with awe-stricken wonder, brown hands, carrying marks of labor, and an eager face, bare feet and rough garments. "A poor farmer's girl," I thought.

The wind freshened and the sun came out and warmed me where I lay. At last, I sat up and look-

ing around, found that my angel of mercy had gone. I struggled to my feet and painfully staggered up the beach and found a path leading along the shore toward the great mass of rocks that towered up from the sea. Thinking that it would lead to some friendly aid, I climbed its steady ascent.

CHAPTER X

The Hermitage

Turning a projecting rock, I caught sight of an old man sitting in the entrance of a cave. He wore no hat and leaned against a rock for support, his head was on his breast and he appeared to be gazing out at sea from under overhanging brows. I called to him, but receiving no response concluded that he was deaf. Glancing to the left, some fifty feet from where I stood, I saw an image of Buddha, and at its feet a bowl of rice. At sight of the food, I forgot that it was not mine; that it was devoted to the idols; and the next moment I was on my knees before the rice, also forgetful of the silent watcher on the rock. A handful of dried persimmons lay on a paper and I ravenously crammed them into my mouth. Then a sense of shame seized me and I turned around expecting to see the old man at my elbow to upbraid me for my act of desecration, but still he sat there, gazing out at sea. Something in his attitude caused me to look at him more closely. He wore the coarse garments of a hermit, and I judged that he lived in the cave and was much revered. His religious character was witnessed to by the idols, fetishes that adorned the trees near at

hand, and by the sacrificial food that had been contributed by persons living on the island. Long white hair, having escaped from his topknot, rested on his shoulders. It surrounded a white, pinched face, which, at a distance, gave him a saintly look. On approaching, the whole body presented an appearance of extreme weakness. Indeed, he slouched forward as if on the point of falling. He sat on the edge of a circular precipitous rock. I subsequently discovered that it ended in a caldron-shaped formation through which the tide, in its ebb and flow, laughed and sobbed in ghost-like moans. Remembering the practice of hermits of assuming an indifference to their surroundings, giving the impression of being engrossed with meditation and never allowing themselves to be surprised, I put out my hand and gently pulled on his sleeve to attract his attention from the sea, then I sprang back in terror. The man was dead! Turning, I ran down the path, then looked back. The body had tipped forward and was on the point of falling. Back I ran to prevent its plunging into the sea, and a thousand thoughts surged through my mind. "Would I not be made responsible for the death of that man?" For a moment the repulsion common to our race, when in the presence of the dead, seized me and I hesitated. My hand shook with agitation, and as I reached forward to pull the body from the edge of the cliff, I gave it a jar in the wrong direction and it lurched

forward. I grabbed at the coat, but it tore in my grasp and the body pitched forward into the caldron, thirty feet below. A dull splash came to my ears and I leaned over the rock, but could see nothing save the dark sides of the caldron, and the agitated water within. Long I gazed and there came back to me the sighing, sobbing voice of the tide as it strained and tugged at the rocks in the subterranean caverns below. Slowly I climbed back, dizzy and sick at heart. In safety from the precipice, I leaned up against the rock and tried to think what I should do. Great physical weariness overcame me and I slept. When I awoke the sun was nearly to the western horizon and a flood of light gilded all the island's rocky peaks. A murmuring caused me to look down. There stood an old woman, head uncovered, mumbling and prostrating herself to the ground in profound reverence, and at her side stood the girl who had rescued me from the sea, gazing up at me in amazed wonder. In her hand she carried a bowl of rice like the one I had stolen from the gods. The woman was saying:

"O, magician of the cave of eternal youth, give me youth! Give me youth!"

At first I was on the point of rushing to her and telling my tale of shipwreck and asking aid, then her words kept me silent. Soon she ceased bowing and stood with her hands extended, palms together. Side by side they stood, wrinkled, puckered age, and

youth, beautiful youth. The one, waiting in feverish expectancy, with piteous disappointment already paling her lips. The other, aglow with a look of wonder.

"What service would you ask, woman?" I said.

"Ah! noble sir," she replied, "the change to youth has changed your voice."

The feeling that I was being addressed by the insane kept me silent.

"O holy seer, give me youth," she cried. "Make this crooked back straight, and these poor old, withered, stiffened arms supple and strong. Bid these gray hairs begone and these wrinkles flee away. Give me back the beauty of youth."

"Crazy," I involuntarily replied.

"No, no, but you promised it these many months. For two days we have brought food to the gods which they have refused, and you sat there in sullen silence, mute to all our appeals. To-day you rose out of the sea, as you promised, clothed with youth, and see! the gods have consumed our offerings," said she, pointing to the bowl I had emptied in my craze of hunger. Then, turning as if weary in a petition often repeated, she bade the girl place the rice at the feet of the image.

Over the entrance to the cave I saw the inscription, "Hermitage of Eternal Youth," and an explanation began to dawn upon me. The old man whom I had just pushed into the sea had been a hermit seeking

for himself and promising to others, eternal youth. "If I should declare whom I really were, there would be a demand for the old man," I thought. "His body might be sought for in the caldron and my life pay the price. The island being visited by the outside world so seldom, there must be no limit to the superstition and credulity of these people," I reflected.

The old woman approached me and gazed into my face with rapt attention, evidently following its outline in every detail.

"Beautiful!" she exclaimed. "I knew you would do it. See, Nomie," she added, turning to the girl, "he is young and beautiful."

She slid down on her knees and rocked herself, mumbling verses from the classics. Remembering a conversation with one of these pretentious seers and his manner of addressing people, I said, "Woman, have you learned the lesson of truth?"

"Ah!" she replied, "I am stupid and old, and wisdom and self-repression come not easily to such as I. Let's tell the others," she said, abruptly turning to her companion and hastily rising. They departed down the mountain path. The grace of the girl, tripping along, with now and then a backward glance, reminded me of a fawn in the mountains of my native home.

An hour later, hearing voices coming up the path, I took my seat on the cliff where I had noted that the rock had been worn smooth by the old man dur-

ing the weary years of his hermitage. Soon a score of men, women and children had gathered at the mouth of the cave and watched me with reverential awe till the sun sank and the moon came out; then in suppressed whispers they trooped away.

The cave was formed by a ledge of rocks projecting from the side of the mountain. The soft rock underneath the ledge had been worn away by water until an opening ten feet high had been formed. An aperture at the back, where once a stream had entered during periods of heavy rain, now served as a chimney hole. On the seaward side the cave, at some period, had been entirely open like the front of a shed. Someone, probably the former occupant, had walled it up with stone and plastered it on the inside with clay. In the opposite side a niche, just large enough for a man to lie down in, formed a sleeping place. Besides this there was but one room, ten by forty feet. In the gathering darkness it seemed huge, lofty, terrible. A brass bowl, chopsticks, a brass spoon, a wood pillow and a pile of worn books comprised the furniture of the cave.

I found myself in a position that was embarrassing and distasteful in the extreme, and I was a prisoner. To leave would be to fix the suspicion of murder upon me. I looked through the cave, shuddering at the darkness, then crept back into the moonlit entrance. The sobbing of the waves in the cavern below had become doubly loud in the stillness of the

night, and as the tide rose the wailings and moanings increased. I crawled to the edge of the cliff and looked over, and the cries seemed multiplied, as if a thousand lost souls were in conflict. I wriggled back in fear and imagined that I heard the voice of old Cho, the seer, calling and echoing through the cavern. Then I crept down the steep path and took refuge under a tree in the open, and lying down, slept from exhaustion. The trees sheltered me for many a night thereafter.

Each day food was brought and placed before the idols by the girl whom I had first met. The gods were hearty eaters, for daily the bowl was emptied, and my little visitor seemed satisfied. I learned the hours of her arrival and planned to be seated in the niche where first I had seen the body of old Cho. I always looked at her with the gravity befitting the character of a seer, who had denied himself all thoughts of worldly things. In return she looked up in my face with the innocence of a trusting babe. The contrast of her person, with the deformed creature that had been chosen for my bride, made her appear exceedingly fair. The face was long, rather than round, eyes large, but of what color I could not tell. They did not flinch before one's glance and seemed always to carry the impression of wondering interest. The lips were firm and gave her an expression of steady trustworthiness and the power to endure. When she smiled, all the sunshine of a

sweet nature came into her face, robbing, I thought, the flowers by the wayside of their brightness.

I spoke to her one day. "Nomie," I said, "I heard the old lady call you by that name when I first saw you together. Is she your mother?" She looked up, startled that I should speak to her, then answered:

"No, sir."

"Relation by your father or mother?" I asked.

"Neither, sir."

"Then who are you?" I persisted.

"Does the holy seer of the Hermitage of Youth wish to know?" she asked. I nodded and she turned away from me for an instant, then glanced back in my face with the dumb look in her eyes of a fawn in captivity. Her feet were bare and she raised the short skirt of her dress, exposing the right calf.

"A slave!" I exclaimed. She bore marks of the whip, a sign that I knew so well. My vehemence startled her, and she stood poised on the point of taking flight.

"Do not fear me," I said gently. "The hermit is your friend. I did not know that you were a slave." She turned down the path with a musical, delightful laugh, and I raised my hand to detain her, but could think of no reason for doing so. That moment I learned why my captivity had become pleasant, and why for the past weeks I had relaxed my effort to find some means of escape; why I found the terrors of the night grow less, and why I had taken my

abode nights within the cave and slept peacefully in the niche on the mat of old Cho, the seer.

All night long the laughter echoed in my ears and I determined to know more of her; but the next day, for the first time since I had become a hermit, the old woman brought the offerings unaccompanied by her young companion, and for many days thereafter I saw nothing of her. I wondered at the change and when the woman came with her petitions and low salaams, I looked steadily out to sea. One day I left the food untouched, greatly to that lady's agitation, and to her persistent appeals to his Holiness I made no reply, but looked seaward.

"Ah, me! the gods are angry," said she, and the next day the girl accompanied her and the gods were pleased to consume the food, and what they failed to eat found its way down the murmuring caldron to keep company with the body of old Cho.

I grew weary of the pilgrimages that were made to my hermitage. News of the miracle had spread to the mainland and had brought a multitude; but to all questions I closed my lips and pointed to the image of Buddha. With the books of old Cho at my side, I was supposed to be lost in a spirit of abstraction. They came, all conditions of humanity, the old and withered, the deformed, the maimed, the credulous and superstitious, a multitude with hungry desire that no power on earth could satisfy. Wonderful cures were reported, and some, in ecstatic

frenzy, declared that they felt the fires of youth returning.

Often during these months I felt poignant pain over the uncertainty of the fate of Tong-siki and the rest of our party, and the sorrow that my supposed death was causing my father's household. With the many pilgrims coming and going, I could have made my escape with safety; but there was now a reason for staying more imperative to me than all other considerations—even than the possession of life itself. I had not yet learned that duty should hold sway over all other motives. That was a lesson I learned in after years. Now I wanted to be near Nomie. That I should seek her for my wife seemed when I thought the matter over, the height of insanity. What explanation could the Sung-ji's son make for such an act? And supposing that it was possible to purchase her, and the owner would be willing to part with her, the transaction would require a huge sum of money. I had not the money, nor could I hope that my father would furnish it when the marriage he had planned was to make him richer, and not poorer. The only possible means left to me, I thought, was to marry the slave, and according to the laws of our country become a slave. Then I laughed at the thought. Sooner than allow the holy hermit to become a slave would the people mob both me and the slave owner.

Two months passed before the girl again attended

to the wants of the stone images alone. That day she came and stood near me with drooping eyes. I waited for her to speak.

"Holy seer," she faltered, "will you condescend to tell the fortunes of one of such humble clay as I?"

"Nay, child," said I, "ask me not to tell you your fortune. You know that since I have recovered my youth I engage not in such mysteries that I anger not the gods, who jealously reserve these rights to themselves. I prize my youth and what they have done for me, nor will I offend them, not even were it to serve so fair a one as she who now appeals to me; but rather, may you not tell me the history of your life? How became you a slave? Who were your parents?"

"Know you not of all that, O holy seer?" she asked, with her wondering eyes full upon me. "It was that which led me to address you."

"Indeed?" said I, "tell me all you know of yourself. Sit there on the grassy knoll and tell me all." She knelt at my feet and told me in a soft musical voice the short story that she knew of her life.

"When I can remember first, I lived in a great home, surrounded with servants and all that was necessary to make one happy. They did not call me Nomie,[1] then. They called me Ewa.[2]

"Perhaps I was five years old when a servant of

[1] "Rascal," a name of contempt

[2] Pear Blossom

the magistrate appeared and carried my father off to prison. When he returned he was brought on a stretcher, unable to walk, his legs having been beaten to a pulp. Lingering on a few days, he died. In the meantime, men appeared in official livery, and, presenting papers that my father had signed, took possession of our home and we were transferred to a hut where, at one time, one of our servants had lived. Strangers occupied the old homestead and my mother went out to beg. When father died, the neighbors buried him that night. As I remember now, my mother was still young and attractive. The dead had hardly been carried from our door before a company of men appeared outside demanding entrance. Their purpose was, as afterwards learned, to carry off my mother and compel her to become the concubine of one of the wealthy men of that section, who, I now believe, had something to do with the ruin of my father. The yard around our house was divided by a mat fence, shutting off the back portion from the front; and when they tugged at the door to gain entrance, my mother picked me up, and bidding me keep silent, tied me to her back, crept out of the back door, over the fence, and away into the dark. On we went all night. Now and then she would put me down and sob. The next day we hid in a grove surrounding a number of graves, and at night on again. It was in the time of green corn and we gnawed the uncooked kernels from the cob, and

drank from the brooks. She told me that we were going to find friends that lived a long distance toward the setting sun. On the fourth day, hunger compelled her to beg in the day time. Being unmolested, she grew bold and we traveled all day and fared better. Finally, footsore and worn, she asked the privilege of stopping for a day in a certain village. The request was granted and while there many questions were asked. The innkeeper seemed kind and told her that we might stay as long as we cared to do so. This frightened her, and on the next night we stole away through the sleeping village and traveled until about noon the following day, when we were overtaken by a score of men. One of the party, wearing the livery of an official's servant, ordered our return. My mother on her knees begged for her life and honor.

"'Kill me,' she said at last. 'Death would be sweeter than such a life of captivity.' Then she poured out a torrent of piteous pleadings, telling her whole story. Some said, 'Let her go;' others, looking at her pretty face, urged otherwise, and in an not unkind voice ordered us back to a certain village. We were conducted to a grove in the outskirts of the village, where a large company of men and boys had gathered. Much wine circulated amongst the crowd. The liveried man seemed to claim the ownership of my mother and myself, and named a price for which he would sell her and me

We sat until the sun went down, when a bargain was completed; then a dispute arose over the transaction. High words followed, then blows. The combatants were separated. My mother was led in one direction and I another. When she saw that we were to be separated she became a fury and flung herself at the liveried man, crushed his hat, tore at his hair and scratched his eyes. Most of those present seemed to enjoy the scene and laughed loudly, and when he turned on her, the purchaser forced him aside, and he went off cursing. She finally slid down on the ground, looked after me as they led me away, calling 'Ewa!' and I called in return. She strained her eyes after me, and I saw her, as I have seen her many times since, sitting on the grass half-surrounded by a score of rough men, with disheveled hair, rocking herself in anguish; and often at night in the screaming wind and rushing storm I have heard her calling, 'Ewa! O, my Ewa!' "

Here the girl at my feet paused with her eyes on the ground.

"Well, what else?" I asked.

"Nothing," she answered, "only I was sold twice and now am the slave of a very wealthy man who came to this island some weeks ago, because of the reputed healing powers of the seer who lives in this hermitage. He left the day before you came up out of the sea, and, with some members of his family, we

are either to wait until his return, or follow him to the city of Pyeng-Yang. You remember him, the man with the large, round face, wearing silks, the one who gave you the large sum of money? It is his command that the idols be daily given food."

"Money? I received none," I said, surprised off my guard.

She looked up at me with a searching glance and I felt confused, and looked away at sea in order to recover my composure.

"O, revered seer," said she, "can you tell me, shall I meet my mother and her friends? May I become free?"

"Freedom," I said, glancing at the cave at my back, "is what freedom does. It is a relative term. You may be wishing for that which you do not understand, and if possessed would work you ill. There are people who feel themselves free, but are in reality as much under bondage as if they were in a dungeon, bound hand and foot. Indeed, there are few people in this realm of ours who are not bound down under the miserable bondage of the upper classes. Even in this beautiful island, where nature seems to be almost prodigal in her gifts and the gods overkind, there are some who have but to put out their hands and partake of all they want, yet suffer in galling bondage." I spoke with some bitterness, and she looked up quickly and her eyes followed my glance.

"If you see in your bondage a delight you would call yourself free," I hastily added.

"Can," said she, "the bird in a cage imagine itself winging its way through the sunlit heavens, bathing in the sparkling streams, or sipping honey from the flowers by the wayside? Do you think, noble seer, that it could be? Is there nothing, sir, that you, by appealing to the gods to use their mystic powers, could promise me? Where you have feasted so well, is there not a crumb for me? Think," she added tremblingly; "nothing for poor Nomie, the slave?"

"Nothing for you, dear maiden?" I replied, gazing steadily into her appealing eyes. "The spirits give one what one's own hands can wrench from Nature's niggard grasp. They present opportunities for man to seize, and nothing more. Their power is limited to the power of man's arm and man's heart. Yea, they give not what man wills not to give. If to-day I have prayers for you, they will be addressed to my own heart. Indeed, I have prayed, not to awaken pity, but to smother that which is far more than pity. My prayers to the spirits have mingled with the whisperings and sighings of the sea. Each breeze has borne them over land and sea, and upward to trouble heaven's gate, but they have returned fruitless. Call it not atheism, fair one. To-day, in answering your petition, the seer takes counsel only with his own heart. Have I nothing

for you?" I said, still gazing into her eyes. "I have worlds for you, Ewa." As I spoke her eyes opened wide in puzzled wonder, then as my meaning gradually dawned upon her, her lips parted, and the color crept into her face. Suddenly, springing to her feet, she fled down the mountain path, never again to appear at the Hermitage of Eternal Youth.

Winter came, and my patrons, who had found that it was profitable to maintain interest in the Hermitage, as it brought gain to the island from the outside world, piled heaps of grass in front of my cave. I repaired the clay floor of the niche in the wall and built my fire. I hung a mat over the entrance and found it comfortable in winter. Then I made excursions over the island at night and found several hamlets. Boats I saw in which I might take passage, but nothing of Ewa. New visitors attended to the wants of the gods; I shrank from making inquiries among them, for fear of involving her in some kind of trouble.

Finally the old woman who had ministered so faithfully at the feet of Buddha appeared with an unusually generous offering. I noticed that she lingered long with many a prostration before the shrine, and I motioned her to approach me, which she did with a light on her face—a privilege which she had not dared to avail herself of, since my cold treatment of her some months previous. She bowed low to the ground and waited for me to speak.

"It has been a long time since I have seen you," I said, kindly.

"Does the holy hermit think of such a poor worm of the dust as I?" she asked. "Does he know who goes and who comes?"

"Many have come and gone," I replied, "like the stars that travel in the heavens, and they have gathered about my feet like the frost-bitten leaves that scurry before the autumn wind. When the signs of their destiny are written in the sky, the earth, the sea, and whispered by spirits that murmur with the breeze among the trees and flowers, would I not count them all? The sick and distressed of earth, tottering age has come; laughing, thoughtless youth, possessed of throbbing, bounding life with eager eyes, yearning to gaze into the future, have often bowed here also. Do you think, O woman, that he who has been favored by the gods should not notice all these?"

"The holy hermit has many to counsel him," she replied.

"Nay, woman, but the trembling heart, may the gods not reveal it?"

"The hermit knows all things."

"Not all things, only those which the gods reveal, and they reveal only those things for which the hermit may be of service. Some have bowed here at this shrine, of whom I would make inquiry, knew I that you carried the desired information—both

of the young and of the old. He who threw away his crutch when he touched the shrine and called himself whole. The young also, the maiden who at one time attended to the needs of the gods, what of her?"

"The old man, I remember him," she answered. "He lives on the mainland, so that I have not seen him since the day that he was healed. As for the girl, she is in the household of which I am member. I am a servant, while she is a slave. She is thought more of by our master than are the free servants, and it is believed, that in time, he will make her his concubine; disgraceful though such a union would prove to be to him, yet her brilliancy and beauty outweigh such considerations."

"Then she is treated well?" I said with assumed indifference.

"Sometimes, sir, she rebels like most people who are too brilliant. I was always glad that I am stupid and only know how to obey. Our master, sir, tries sometimes to bring her to obedience with the lash. She doesn't scratch and fight as most of us do; but looks into his face with round, open eyes and pale lips with the expression of a frightened fawn, and, I think, she never consented to do that which she had refused to do."

"She refuses to work, does she?" I said; "tell me more of her.

"She works readily enough. Her beauty is

known far and wide, and large sums of money have been offered for her. At one time she was sold and the papers drawn up. When she knew of it she went into her master's presence. No one knows just what took place, but he ordered her under the lash. Not a word escaped her lips, though the marks went deep. When the beating was over she walked to her master, stood and looked into his eyes without a trace of a tear. It was the look of a dumb animal that would die, but not yield. Her master suddenly grew furious at the whole transaction. He tore the deed in pieces and reviled the would-be purchaser, ordered the money returned, and when the man complained, added ten per cent to the purchase price. The man took the money and started out, but turned back to revile in his turn. Our master caught him by his hair and they were only separated by the combined efforts of neighbors and servants. Some time ago a young man offered to become a slave if he could have the privilege of marrying her. The arrangements were all made, but when she was informed of it, she went to our master and there was a scene which disturbed the whole community, and the young man was driven off. Mr. Yi is a man of fierce temper and iron will, and we all live in fear of him, excepting Nomie. She fears him not, nor does she seem to fear anything, not even the ghosts that glide about the shrines and graves at night."

"He will make her his concubine?" I asked. She glanced up a moment, then said:

"With you, sir, and the gods are hid the events of the future."

"With me and the gods," I reflected. "Such an event would be of interest," I said, and added, "What news have you from the mainland?"

"Alas, sir, rumors are disquieting. When the spring comes, there will be a general uprising of the people in open rebellion. Have you not taught that the end of the present dynasty was at hand? Is there not a prophecy to that effect?" I nodded. "Great companies of people are gathering and drilling in many parts of the country, especially in the south. They purpose to take the field as soon as the warm weather of spring will make camping in the open tolerable. Happy are you, holy seer, that you are hid away on this island; away from the turmoil, temptations and strife, to spend your time in holy meditation, where neither jealousy from love nor the pains of hate enter your soul. Ah, the blessedness of such a great calm! Peace to you, holy hermit," said she, rising. "I am grateful for the moment of conversation. Be gracious, I pray you, to petition the gods in my behalf, as, probably, I shall never have the privilege of visiting these shrines again."

"Long have I served these spirits," she added, pausing and looking back at the cave, "earnest have

I been in my prayers and hard have I labored to destroy the works of the flesh, but it seems blessings are not for one, stupid like me."

"I tremble for fear of the wrath of the gods because of the common infidelity of these days," she continued, apprehensively. "There have not lacked those who questioned the reality of the miracle the gods worked upon you, sir. Such cavil has been quieted by a demand to produce the old man with the gray locks. He—you, sir, were then helpful and communicative, as you have been to me to-day, but since the great change, you have been taciturn and repellant. Forgive me, sir, for repeating idle gossip. They said a man blessed with eternal youth should have sympathy for those on whom age repeats its sad decay. The powerful Yi family and the island folks have been true to you. Alas, for the times! they will soon bring punishment to the impious—the demon of war and slaughter will shortly hold high carnival throughout our land."

"When will you leave?" I asked.

"As soon as the ice melts from the Tong River we are to return to the city of Pyeng-Yang. Peace be with you," she said, and was gone.

I grew weary of the grotesque figure that I had been playing, and blushed at the readiness of our people to receive impostors. My only defense was that I had unwittingly assumed the role of a saint on whom the gods had worked a miracle, and had

undeceived no one for fear of my life; then a stronger motive came into my undisciplined life, to which I yielded. Had I known, even at this time, the misery to which my course was leading me and others, even then I might have slipped away in one of the many visiting boats, and returned to my father's home and the marriage with the deformed bride intended for me.

Spring came, and there was great irregularity in the attendance at the shrine, and I had to economize closely to make ends meet. The previous summer, visitors had contributed considerable cash, which I had hoarded with great jealousy, anticipating a day when I should need it all. Other hands were now ministering to the care of Buddha, and I inquired if the Yi family had left. Being informed that such was the case, I announced that I would make a visit to some other shrine. Many protests came and for a few days, rice of the finest quality and dried fruits reached my hermitage in abundance. "How long would I be away? Where did I intend to go?" was repeatedly asked.

"The city of Pyeng-Yang, where are the temples of Buddha, long neglected; there the gods were sending me."

CHAPTER XI

Victims of War

"They are coming, a great army of them! tens of thousands, millions!"

"How many, did you say?"

"Millions!"

"How far away, and when will they get here? What do they look like? Have they cannons and banners?"

"Banners? I should say so. Guns? They are like the trees of the forest; and cannons?—large enough for a donkey to crawl into. They will be here in three days. These Chinese soldiers are great fighters. The Japanese army will hardly be a morning meal, if it should dare to approach the city of the Beautiful Turf."

The speaker was a courier just in from the north and had stopped in our wineshop for a bowl of vermicelli, and a cup of wine. The room, door, and street in front of the shop were filled with eager listeners.

I had been in the city a month and found the home of the rich Yi. Yet though I met him and his servants, I could get no definite information regarding Ewa. Soon the money that I had saved at the Her-

mitage was gone, and I secured water buckets with my last handful of cash, and carried water for a living. I met former acquaintances, but they did not recognize me in my altered circumstances. I bound a cloth around my head, after the style of the lowest coolie, and carried water to the home of the rich Yi. Many days I carried and deposited my load in the huge earthen jars, and received the pittance for my labor. Each trip I made from the river to the house, I lingered a moment as if tired, and finally saw Ewa crossing the yard, and put myself in her path. She looked me in the face without a sign of recognition, though I thought she gave a slight start. I gave up my business of a water carrier and hunted the city for work. Many days I spent in the search, and at last sat on the veranda of a wine shop, weary and destitute. The owner, hearing my voice, as I replied to some one's greetings, called me to enter. I did so, and he asked me many questions.

"Can you write? What have you been doing? Are you honest?"

I noticed that he was blind, and while addressing me gazed at the light of the open door.

"Hi, in there!" he called, pounding on the inside door, "come in here, will you?"

A slatternly looking woman, some fifty years of age, responded.

"What do you think of this young chap?" he continued. "His voice pleases me. See here, young

fellow," he said, addressing me, "I am blind and cannot attend to my business. I have tried a great many men, but they all cheat me of my living. I like your voice. Stay with me, and I will do the right thing by you."

Though having called the woman to ask her judgment in the case, he settled the business without consultation. She acquiesced with a shrewd glance at me and retired. I was duly installed as general manager of the inn, to feed the people with vermicelli and wine, and eject any when necessity required, and, as the innkeeper impressively said, "keep the books."

War had been declared between Japan and China. Battles on sea had been fought in which, report had it, the Chinese had been worsted, but no one believed that an army of the great Central Kingdom could suffer defeat. Man for man, the courier declared, and all agreed with him, the Chinese must be more than a match for the Japanese. China was a great kingdom, while Japan was a small country, and always much despised. Had not Korea herself, during the past centuries, beaten the Japanese dogs from her shores? It was said that his Majesty had requested aid from the mighty Middle Kingdom, and who were these monkeys from across the channel who dared insult our Emperor? All the traditions of the people had been identified with the Chinese; had we not been bound to China for cen-

turies for protection and help against the Island Kingdom? The Japanese talked loudly of the glories of political freedom, but what did we want of freedom? We wanted to be left alone.

Armies were now in motion, but the hordes from China were nearer the city than the hordes from Japan; but, alas, in either case, the country would be eaten up as from a storm of locusts. Every man in reach of the army would become a slave, as hewers of wood and drawers of water, and wives and daughters would become the army's spoil.

All these things, and much more, were talked and argued by those surrounding the courier, as he sat on the inn floor. I went out through the town. The people had taken panic and were fleeing. At each gate there was a jam, people surging through with loads on their backs, hastening to get away from the city before the army should arrive. Horses, cattle, donkeys, men, women and children all loaded with what the people could hastily gather from their homes; jostling, crowding, and shouting. Boats could not be obtained in numbers sufficient to transport the people across the river, so they collected, a great company along the river bank, and at night lay down with their goods, and when a boat would return from depositing its burden on the other side the people would fight for a place therein. On the opposite side of the city, the hills were white with a motley crowd. All day long and all night they

A MERCHANT

shuffled sullenly on. The great silent city had become a living stream, like a volcano pouring forth its centuries of pent-up forces out upon hill and plain, and when the stream of the outmoving life became smaller, a counter stream set in for the city. All the riffraff, the vicious, the human vultures, came to gorge themselves at the shambles of expected slaughter. They skulked and crawled into holes till there should be victims of spoil.

On making inquiries I found that the Yi family had, by a large sum of money, made close friends with the governor, and trusted to his protection against any violence to their home, from the coming Chinese hordes.

Up to this time, I had made diligent inquiries regarding the affairs of my father's household, and learned that since the loss of his son in the river the summer previous, he had remained close at home. Of Tong-siki I could learn nothing. It was reported that he had joined the rebels in the south, and had met his death at the hands of Chinese troops, who had been sent there to aid the government, just before the rupture between China and Japan. I did not believe the report, as it was not Tong-siki's habit to join the common herd. That he was planning for a struggle with the government, I knew; that he was fearless and would value his life little if in sacrificing it he could accomplish his end, I knew, but did not believe that he would offer his

life in that way. A longing seized me to visit my home; but within a few days the slave girl would be surrounded by a horde, eager to plunder and destroy, and I must wait to learn her fate.

At last, the panic in the city became a frenzy. The Chinese army, it was said, would arrive on that day, and scouts were already within the walls, their officers making demands for accommodations for the army. Room was not wanting, for the people had deserted their homes. Most of the remaining households, who had braved the coming peril to the last moment, fled like rats from a burning building; north, east and south they went. The west was filled with the approaching army. I went out on the city wall and saw them, horse and foot soldiers; a great host, with gorgeous banners inscribed with strange devices, were marching toward the city. Over the advance columns waved flags and banners nearly hiding the soldiers from view. In the main, the army was supplied with much better arms than I had ever seen before, but many of the soldiers carried guns and spears of a pattern familiar to Korea for three hundred years. They looked fierce and we had no doubt but that they would speedily punish the insolent Japanese, who dared to offend the great Central Kingdom.

The governor and magistrate, with their retinues, met the Chinese generals some distance from the city, and knocked their heads on the ground to wel-

come the great men, for the protection of such worms of the dust as the citizens of Korea.

"The fat of the land is at your disposal, and our people are the slaves of the representatives of the Emperor who reigns within the holy city of heaven. Let your honorable soldiers occupy the homes of our despicable people. Permit us to kiss your hand for this fatherly purpose of driving back the insolent dogs from Japan," said the governor.

They filled up the empty houses, cursed the people, and demanded wine and food. They took the governor at his word, and crowded him out of his spacious rooms. He was happy for the privilege of a closet for himself and servants, where he could write notices to the magistrates to bring food for the great Chinese army. The country was stripped of its products and the impoverished people wandered from their homes.

I attempted to carry water to the Yi family, but was repeatedly seized, and the water taken by the Chinese. When I protested I was rolled in the dust. The water famine became acute, and finally, by moving out at night, I was able to deliver my buckets at the door of Ewa's master, but to my dismay, the place was filled by officers of the Chinese army. I had already seen enough of them to know that they would allow nothing to stand in the way of their desires. I turned the water in a great earthen jar, and in blind rage sought out the master of the

house, and demanded why he had given his slaves and servants over to the Chinese. I was thrown from the compound and had plenty of time to consider my rashness.

Later I was seized and set to work on the nearest fortification, without pay, and as soon as I got the chance, I ran away, but was again seized and set to work at another point. Bits of food I picked up wherever I could get a mouthful, and sometimes I sat before the huge piles of rice heaped on mats, which were spread on the ground for the soldiers. Nights I spent beneath the compound wall of the rich Yi.

It was hard, rigorous experience for which my life of idleness had not fitted me; but I was learning and my muscles were hardening, for which, later, I was profoundly thankful. I often look back on those days and wonder how it was possible for me to take the step which would practically uncaste me, and eagerly seek the labor of a coolie. It was not the result of logic, or patriotism, or an altruistic purpose, but the heart had taken leave of the head, and with a blind trust to fate I followed my fortune as a night traveler, a Will-o'-the-wisp.

Soon news arrived that the Japanese army was moving toward the city. The telegraph line had been cut, separating us from all communication with the outside world. Scouts reported that four divisions of the enemy's army were approaching the

city from the four points of the compass. The fortified hills surrounding the city were strongly occupied and a semblance of discipline took the place of disorder.

On the street, one day, I was seized and my topknot vigorously twisted to see if it were really fast to my scalp. Japanese spies, dressed as Koreans with the topknot, had been discovered in the city. They were summarily decapitated, and the Koreans applauded. After that soldiers detailed for the purpose, swept the city, tugging at the topknots of every Korean within its walls. Old men who had the temerity to remain within the city, and had artificially supplied that of which nature had robbed them, were mistaken for Japanese spies, and shared their fate without the privilege of a trial. The heads of Japanese and Koreans alike adorned the entrance to the city gates, and the Chinese soldiers were astonished to find groups of Koreans weeping before the gruesome spectacle.

"Alas!" the people said, "how terrible is the kindness of our friends."

All the city gates but two were barricaded. Some of them were banked on the inside with earth and stone, closed effectually, both to friends within the city, and against the enemy without.

CHAPTER XII

The Condemned Minstrel

On the evening preceding the first day's battle there was feasting in the city. In her poverty, the city was trying to entertain the gorgeously dressed army. She was bowing, protesting her unworthiness, and lauding her terrible guests and smiling with ghastly lips and terror-filled eyes.

I made my way through the crowd of moving soldiers to the house of the rich Yi, and with the hurrying, jostling company of servants, found my way past the crowd and into the compound, opening upon which was a pavilion where the guests were gathered. Torches, made from the fat pine of torn-down houses, flared in profusion everywhere. The pavilion was one of those structures so dear to the hearts of our people; its roof of mountain-like dimensions was supported by huge columns of wood. It was square, running with an easy slope upward from the four corners to a sharp peak in the center. From the center of the eaves, on each side, it ran upward to the corners, giving the structure a half humorous, half jaunty appearance. The pavilion towered high above its neighbors, like a jocular giant, peering over their heads to get a view beyond

the city wall, and seemed hugely pleased with what it saw, though too massive and too secretive of nature to tell all. Near the corner stood a huge tree, towering above all else, and spreading its arms over the pavilion, and out over a sickly pool, upon whose bosom the gorgeous lotus, hiding beneath it festering sores, like a silken gown and jewels covering the mistress of pestilence. Occasionally gusts of wind would set the torch lights all aslant, and the tree to rocking and swaying its arms, as if distressed with the burden of its own secrets.

The company was seated on thin, round cushions. On the farther side from the open yard, where the pavilion was enclosed, was the seat of honor occupied by General Yuan. At his right was the host, Mr. Yi, and near were grouped the others according to their rank. I was pleased to note that Mr. Yi, with his burly form decked out with silks, presented an appearance not inferior to his noted guests. I was surprised to see that he was addressing members of the company without the use of the interpreter. That menial stood with a respectful attitude, somewhat in the rear of the company. In the front of the company, musicians discoursed strange music with drums, cymbals and horns. What was lacking of harmony and expression was made up in vigor and noise.

Tiny tables of food were brought in and placed before the guests, and the feasting was on. I blushed

at the scanty fare, and was shocked at the lack of politeness on the part of the host in not apologizing. Then on second thought I was glad for the spark of independent dignity that shone in the midst of our humiliation.

The great mass of people, high and low, had fled from the city; the honest and the dishonest, the idle and the industrious, had gone; but the gaudy plaything of the rich and idle—the professional dancing girl—remained. Grim war has no terrors for her, the fierce hand of hate grows soft and gracious under her wanton smiles. They were at the feast in paint and silks, like gaudy butterflies, not to partake of the feast, but to nestle near with shy glances, giving the occasion a sense of voluptuousness and luxury.

When the tables were finally removed, the musicians struck up a soft, lively tune, and the dancing girls took their places in the center of the floor. Each dancer held in her hand a sword of a very ancient pattern, and began gracefully posturing in harmony with the music. As the music gained in volume and spirit, the dancing became animated and then passionate, till an ancient tragedy of Korean history was portrayed to the absorbed interest of the guests. At the close a smile of pleasure swept through the company, and I noted the look of satisfaction that lighted up the face of the rich Yi. The wines may have been poor and the food execrable, but the dancing inferior to none.

"Better than the Chinese dancing," said the generous-minded guest, General Yuan.

Others bowed their appreciation. Wines and tobacco circulated in abundance, and the music and dancing were resumed. I had moved frequently from point to point, only pausing an instant in one place, that I might not be recognized as an intruder. During the dance the absorbed interest of the company allowed me to approach close to one of the pillars of the pavilion. When it ceased I hastily withdrew to the shadows of the great gate, at the entrance to the compound. As I stopped beneath the eaves of the gate, I collided with some one and was startled almost into a panic; but recovering, roughly asked who it was, as if I had found an intruder and proposed to have him ejected.

"Only the minstrel," was the half-frightened, apologetic reply.

"The what?" I said, breathing a sigh of relief.

"The minstrel," he repeated, extending his lute as proof of the statement.

I took the instrument in my hands and touched the strings lightly, and its sweet voice came back to me with a murmur of memories. I recognized my companion, as one of those now nearly extinct geniuses, a wandering minstrel. I remembered a gray-haired man who often journeyed to my father's house, and placed the instrument in my hands. He came to make the lute laugh, and cry, and sing like a thing of life.

"Throw me out, lad, and I will thank you. I am here much against my will," he said.

Something in his voice gave me a start, and seizing him by the shoulder, I dragged him into the light, then I picked him up in my arms and carried him back into the shadows. It was the wasted, tottering form of the old friend of my childhood. I pulled his delicate face over on my shoulder and bathed it with tears.

"Old Mayo," I cried, "where did you come from?" He freed himself and stood up, searching my face carefully in the uncertain light.

"Ah!" said the man who was seldom moved by anything but his music, "you are the son of the great Sung-ji, the boy who was drowned last season."

"Not dead," I said.

"No?" he asked, pulling his rumpled coat in order. "Simply ran away, hey?"

"No, no; I was driven out to sea, and have not been home yet," I replied.

"A coolie, I see;" he added drily.

I did not like his cold response to my burst of feeling, and remembering that I was the Sung-ji's son, and he one who had sought alms at my father's gate, stepping from him, I stiffly replied, that I hoped, in my delight to see him, I had not hurt him.

He noted the change in my voice, and reaching for my hand, led me to a bend in the wall, where we would not be interrupted.

"No, lad," said he, "my heart is full. Yours is the first familiar face I have seen for many days. I fell in the rear of the Chinese army some time ago, and have come through a desolated region to this city. China has loved us to our ruin. I was seized in the city yesterday for a Japanese spy, because my hair had fallen out and my sangtu[1] was gone.

"To prove that I am a Korean, I played until the tears blinded the eyes of the commander and they ordered me here to-night to entertain this company of revelers and wait for my fate to-morrow. They forget, however, that even a dying man may grow hungry. They want my lute to laugh while they whet the axe for my neck. No prison could be more secure than this compound. Sentinels are posted at all openings. Thrice have I lounged around the yard vainly looking for an unguarded opening, but finally took refuge far from that terrible discord that they call music. Indeed, my fingers were in my ears when you bumped against me. Tell me your story, lad. No, you will not have time. Those noisy demons across the way are stopping their powwow. My turn must be near," he added with a groan.

A thousand questions were on my lips regarding my home, but at that moment a call for the lute was heard. He picked up the instrument and rose unsteadily to his feet. Hardship and old age were fast telling on him.

[1]Hair worn on the top of the head in a topnot is called a "Sangtu."

A thought struck me, and seizing the lute—"O, Mayo," I said, excitedly, "let me have it. I will play. Quick! Quick! They are calling, and will be searching for you."

"No, no," said he. "The minstrel forfeits his life in the morning. The song—then death."

"Quick! Your hat, shoes, coat. Lights are moving, they are searching!" In a moment his shoes were on my feet, and his broad-brimmed hat hiding my dark hair and much of my face. I had forced his coarse coat from him.

"Can you do it, lad?" he asked, and I detected tears in his voice. "Give them music of war and love, boy. How large you have grown. Indeed, if you do as well as when we sat those long days under the sweet elm on the banks of the Tong River, it will be well for old Mayo to die and pass the art on to you. But think, lad; music—then death."

The old man had followed me out into the light to meet those who were hunting for the minstrel. I had taken the precaution to twist my headcloth around his scanty, gray locks.

"Here he is," they shouted, as they caught sight of me with the lute under my arm. "Hurry there, you," they called, "his Excellency is waiting. Who is this?" they asked, looking at my companion. He was a picture of feeble old age, as he stood, half clad, in the flickering torch light.

"Hungry," I said. "Give him something to eat

and lead him out." I was pushed on, and was glad, on glancing back, to see him led to the open kitchen door.

I knelt at the feet of those who had demanded music of him whom they had condemned to death. My back was to the open yard, and I sat facing an opening that led into the main building, the eaves of which nearly touched the eaves of the pavilion. The search had called out many idlers of the compound. Before me, under the roof of the other building, were the dancing girls, and over their shoulders peered the faces of many women belonging to the household of the great Yi. I was told to face the company in the pavilion and arose accordingly, but in kneeling managed again to face the company in the outer building. A smile of indulgence flitted over their faces, supposing that I was overcome with embarrassment, in reply to which, I straightened my shoulders and with great deliberation settled upon my heels, then curled my feet in front and assumed the position of their equals, in sitting down upon a cushion that was at my side. A moment of tense silence followed, and one of the attendants moved forward and hoarsely whispered so that all heard:

"Down on your knees, fool!" I arose and stepped in front of the host, and bowing low, said:

"Most excellent sir, he who is appointed to please you with music, and song, and then to die, whose soul will precede to the spirit land, a few hours, the

souls of these noble generals; he, who in his youth was, and still is, the peer of this excellent company, save he who has the rank of General, assumes the right of sitting; so it is written in the law of the sages." Almost in unison with my voice the interpreter had done his duty.

"The music, the music," called a guest. "The music," repeated the host. I sat down on the cushion facing the building beyond, and when an attendant stepped forward to interfere, the guest of honor waved him aside. I chose a war song that good old Mayo had stirred my heart with when a boy. An uneasy look crept into the faces of some of the officers. Their minds were busied with the thoughts of the uncertain conflict of the near future. I played of love and fidelity, and the company grew quiet. I was back on the river bank under the sweet elm with Mayo. I heard the water dashing at my feet, a thousand odors were in the air, and from the haze of a happy, sunny day, appeared the face of one for whom I had given up all. The strings under my fingers yearningly sang and wept in response to the great sob that filled my soul. The dancing girls had pushed nearly to the pavilion, and in their rear stood the women of the home, yielding to their curiosity as far as custom would allow. Two of the dancers moved their position, and revealed a kneeling figure with the face upturned to me in absorbed interest. Tipping my head back, my hat slipped down upon

my back like a shield, with the rim reaching above my head. I gazed into the eyes of the maiden, as I had done once before, at the old hermitage, and she looked back with the old, startled look of wonder.

Suddenly, an echo reverberated through the hills and seemed to besiege the city walls. The company started, and instinctively rose to its feet, then again the echo distinctly proclaimed skirmishing in front of the city, and immediately the compound was in wild confusion. There was a clatter of feet outside and an orderly entered with a note to General Yuan, who received it quietly, and did not forget to thank his host for the pleasant occasion. A sharp command followed, and a guard of fifty men, from beyond the gate, poured into the yard. I thought to make my escape in the sudden confusion; but a hand was laid on my shoulder and I was led to one of the rooms of a long, low building lining the compound and locked in, while a soldier began pacing at the door. I threw myself on the floor, and was comforted with the thought that when the examination should take place the persistency with which my sangtu would cling to my scalp, would be sufficient proof of my nationality.

The firing had ceased and the steady tramp of my guard, with now and then the bark of a dog, was the only sound that reached my prison cell, and slumber sped me on to the ghastly scenes of the morrow.

CHAPTER XIII

The Contract, and an Execution

I dreamed of the old cave overlooking the sea, and the sobbing of the tide through the rocks below. Voices called and whispered my name. The music of laughter was in the voices, and out of the mist appeared a face, a sweet face, which had often smiled at me. The lips parted and beckoned me to follow. Eagerly I pursued, and the face receded seaward. I followed the phantom till, slipping on the brink of the cliff, I looked into the abyss at the withered, lifeless face of old Cho, the seer.

I awoke with a start, feeling that someone was with me in the room. A late moon had risen and was glancing in upon the place where I lay, but in the corners darkness prevailed. Believing that my dream had deceived me, I lay back on the wood pillow, while my eyes rested upon the darkness of the corner opposite. Gradually a light outline seemed to possess the deep shadows, then a white figure rose and stood regarding me without a motion. My heart choked me with sudden fear, when a soft whisper reached my ear. "O, holy seer." Then I knew. I did not rise. The revulsion of feeling from fear left me with a sense of weakness and almost nausea.

In the moonlight I recognized Ewa's face, on which was written deepest distress. I put out my hand, but she shook her head and withdrew. Fearing that I might frighten her away, I remained quiet and it seemed as if I were still in my dreams. She presently crept on hands and knees close to my side.

"Holy seer," she breathed rather than whispered, "know you of the morrow?"

"Not seer, maiden," I said. "I am no more of the cave. What of the morrow?"

"Know you not that you are to die?"

"Die?" said I. "For what crime? My hair is well rooted to my scalp, and there is an abundance of it. Will it not prove that I am a Korean?"

"Know you not that the minstrel is already condemned to death? Did you think, sir, there would be another trial? Could a haughty Japanese defy General Yuan with more frantic zeal than you did? Think you that they will need any better proof?"

The terrible truth gradually dawned upon me, and made me sick and faint. After a long pause I managed to compel my lips to say, "When? When, Ewa, when?"

"I do not know, sir, but think about sunrise."

She bent to gaze in my face, and her breath came short and sharp, waving the hair on my forehead.

"How did you get in?" I asked.

"Money will be of little use in a day or two—never mind how I got it—money did it."

"Will not money take us out?" I asked.

"Death for both of us," she replied; then after a pause, added, "O, let us try."

"No, no! It would endanger your life."

"See," said she, pulling back her sleeve and extending her bare arm near my eyes.

"The cross," said I, wonderingly, as I noted the sign pricked in her white flesh. She withdrew the arm, and from her pocket took a needle, and reaching for my wrist deftly pricked beneath the skin the sign of the cross.

"Will to-morrow be the cross?" I asked.

"I do not know, but for me—the cross always."

"O, Ewa, our marriage contract," I exclaimed, lifting the little toil-stained hand, and touching reverently the sign of the cross.

She rose and glided away like a ghost in the moonlight, and I wondered if it were all true. I thought I felt a slight impress on the forehead as if a breeze had touched me there. Then the truth of my sentence came over me, and my face blanched in the dark, and when I rose, my legs shook under me. I felt across the darkened corner where Ewa had disappeared. A small door, evidently opening into a floorless kitchen, met my hand and resisted all efforts to push it open.

Why had I gone to sleep? Why had I not dug through the mud walls during the night? I bitterly thought. Through the lattice work, covered with

paper serving as a small window, I worked my fingers, and placing my eye to the hole could see the east lighting with the coming dawn. Silently, I struggled with the latticed window, but could not move it. My hand slipped and the sudden noise brought the gun of the guard against the front door with a savage expletive in Chinese.

I sat down and tried to think, and as I fully realized my position, a feeling of stupefaction crept over me, for a time, destroying my power of reasoning. Finally, rousing myself, the scenes of my short life rapidly passed before my mind; my home and all its protection and solicitude; my mother's and father's faces; broad-shouldered, rugged Tong-siki; old Mayo and his weeping lute. The light, creeping into the corner, revealed the instrument of my woe. I remembered that the neighbors often gathered to listen to that wizard of music. When I took the instrument from the old man's hand, and the plaintive strings brought tears to their eyes, they would shake their heads and say, "Uncanny, aye, uncanny. Bid the boy leave the voice of the spirits alone. Anger not the gods, or like a hound, hot upon the track of its prey, they will run the lad down. Aye, music will be his death."

Suddenly, my meditations were interrupted by a roll of distant rifle fire, and the immediate booming of heavy guns from the fortifications in front of the city. A feeling of grim pleasure, like an evil bird,

winged its way into my soul. I would not be the only one at the slaughter that day, and perhaps where many fall, there will be a chance for some to escape.

The sun rose, yet I was not led to the execution. Occasionally, a shot would pierce the roof of the house and send pieces of tile rattling down upon the ground. Twice during the morning I heard a sharp explosion in the vicinity of the house, caused by the dropping of shells near at hand. I tore the paper clear from the lattice work in front and saw my guard standing a few feet away, listening to the battle that seemed to approach every moment.

Finally, there was a rattle at the chain on my door. Two men entered, while faces filled the doorway. My feet were bound and my hands tied behind me, then hands and feet were tied together, and I lay on the floor like a goat ready to be slung upon the shoulders of its keeper. A long pole was brought in, and passed between legs and arms so that, when they lifted the pole to a dozen shoulders, I swung underneath and lengthwise with it. My head swung downward and swayed with the motion of the carriers. Hasty remarks were passed among the bearers, as the crowd conducted us out of the gate into the opening. My countrymen with scared faces crowded the entrance to the yard. "Spy, traitor," passed from lip to lip, adding to my bitterness.

Leaving the gate the bearers turned abruptly to the north and journeyed for half an hour up the hill, back of the city. The twisting and wrenching at my arms became excruciating, but I bit my lips and resolved that I would die, as a brave man should —without a murmur.

At last, I was deposited face down upon the ground in the dust. The thongs tying my hands and feet were cut, and I was turned upon my back, my hands still bound behind me. Immediately some one seized me roughly by the hair, and pulled me to my knees and my head forward near the ground. As my face came forward I noticed a huge Chinaman standing at my side with a heavy sword held in both hands. Soon it would be over. The earth seemed to whirl beneath my eyes, then my vision cleared, and I counted the pebbles lying at the roots of a tuft of grass. A tiny ant wound its way among the pebbles, while another climbed a blade of grass, unaware, I thought, of the flood bounding through my veins above their home. The shadow of the rising sword fell across the sand under my eyes, and I caught my breath and grew rigid for the blow, then there was a sharp report, like a lightning crash, and I rolled over on my side, half covered with earth. Instantly a face, shaded by a farmer's shield-like hat, looked down into mine and a sharp knife passed between hands and feet.

"Run, run, lad!" cried the voice of Mayo. As I struggled to my feet I put out my hand, and when I glanced at it, it was warm and red. A glance told the story. A shell had fallen in our midst, and my would-be executioner was a heap, with his hideous sword under him. Others were lying near, some still, while others screamed and moaned. I ran, or hobbled, until the circulation returned to my ankles, then I plunged over the next rise of ground into a small creek, and took refuge behind a bowlder, where I washed the red from my hands. On the side of the narrow gorge, appeared Mayo frantically gesticulating for me to run. Down the valley I sped toward the city, hoping to be lost in the crowd. Plunging around a bowlder, I stumbled and fell. Looking back at the cause of my accident, I saw the body of one of my countrymen, his face near the water and a hoe in his hand. The grass on the bank above was red, showing where he had dragged himself, by the aid of his hoe, till his lips had almost touched the cool stream; then his soul had fled. I noticed that he was young, scarcely more than a boy. I tore the turban from his head and bound it around mine, pulled his coat off and put mine on him, and smeared it with blood. I raised a stone in the creek and dropped the bloody garment under, then seizing his hoe ran on. Voices in front brought me to a standstill.

A score of soldiers and as many of my countrymen had started in pursuit of the hated spy, and they had cut off my escape down the creek gorge. For me to return would be impossible, so I shouldered my hoe and walked leisurely on, trying to repress my fierce breathing. Up the gorge they came and I stepped aside to let them pass. The foremost seized me and demanded something in Chinese. I swung my hoe and chattered vociferously, and pressed my stomach to show that I was hungry. An interpreter coming up demanded who I was.

Just from the fortifications on the north, coming to the city to get something to eat, but I would go back, indeed I would. I had a special delight in working on Chinese fortifications. Ordinarily, hunger would only add to my zeal, but I did not know but that my home had been blown to pieces by the bombardment, and my old father killed.

"Stealing hoes," said he, pointing to that instrument in my hands.

No, no; I brought it along simply to bury my father with if he should have been killed; then, too, I was afraid that the Japanese might steal it in my absence.

The Chinaman laughed, and then a cry from those who, after a glance at me, had hurried on up the gorge, started him in pursuit. Evidently my ruse had succeeded. I learned afterwards that they took up the poor fellow's body and decapitated it, and

anxious to return to the city where important and exciting events were happening they did not stop to bury the body but hastened back to their head-quarters where they reported that the spy had been executed. Fortunately for me, they who had noted my face closely were lying still in death on the hill-side.

CHAPTER XIV

Panic

Stray shots were clipping the grass on the bank above me and I became conscious, for the first time, that the noise of battle waged with terrific fury on four sides of the city, and that the Chinese were not driving the Japanese back, but from the sounds, were themselves taking refuge inside the city walls.

All day I moved out and in among the buildings that shivered with the shock of battle. Shells exploded, and flames burst out here and there from the straw thatched roofs. The wounded were carried from the walls and laid in sheltered places in long lines of writhing, moaning shapes.

The outer fortifications were gradually abandoned, and when night closed in, the troops were massed behind the wall inside the city and fought on.

I moved amid this fury of human passion, indifferent to the rain of shot and shell. Amidst the heat and stifling smoke was the cool touch upon my forehead, and a sweet voice ringing in my ears, and I was happy. Thus may one carry heaven with him 'mid scenes of hell.

Often, I found myself at the gate of the rich Yi, but it was guarded by soldiers, as the headquarters

of General Yuan. I looked into the eyes of the mangled and dying and wondered how death could be so cruel. Then a great feeling of pity filled my heart and I sought among the brackish wells for water, and filling a gourd carried it to their grateful lips many times that day, while messengers of death fell around me. I had escaped death once, and somehow felt that it would not call for me again that time.

Later, I was seized with an impulse to visit the place where I had nearly lost my life and, for the first time since my escape, a feeling of terror crept over me as I looked upon the mangled corpse of him who was supposed to be myself.

When night came on the firing ceased, and I crept up to the wall that sheltered Ewa and, wearied beyond expression, lay down on the ground and slept.

At dawn, heavy firing announced the beginning of the next day's carnage, and the besieged fought with less confidence. Many of them were driven to the walls by their officers. I was seized and set to work with my hoe on the embankment where it had been broken down by the previous day's fighting.

During the morning, a huge pile of rice was heaped upon a large mat near where I worked, and I joined the soldiers around it with my hoe leaning against my shoulder, and no one forbade me.

The fighting became terrific and men fell everywhere, and I was ordered to help carry the wounded from the walls. We stretched them out by the side of yesterday's victims, and the line grew longer momentarily. Yesterday's wounded had received little care, and many lips that had moaned then were silent to-day.

As night approached, the greatest confusion prevailed, and hundreds deserted and prowled through the streets for plunder, defying their officers when ordered to the walls. If the enemy had known the panic within the city, they might easily have taken it long before they gained possession of the northern fortifications, where they turned our own guns upon the city. When night fell again our general asked for an armistice, which was agreed to by the Japanese.

Early in the evening camp fires were extinguished, and the embankment stopping the great West Gate was partly removed, as if preparations were being made to admit the enemy. The walls of the city were practically deserted and its defense given up. Soldiers threw away their guns and loaded themselves with plunder. Finally, it dawned upon me that the Chinese soldiers were going to try to escape and leave the Koreans to their fate, for no one doubted that the capture of the city would result in an indiscriminate massacre.

I pushed my way through a surging mass of disorganized soldiery and found the home of Yi still under guard. Returning to watch the movements of the panic-stricken soldiers, I ran into a group of Koreans who were excitedly gesticulating. Everybody called something, but no one knew what the other intended to do.

"They can't get the West Gate open and are planning to flee from the South Gate. Let's go! let's go!" someone called.

"Better stay. They will shoot you down on the outside of the city!" a voice protested.

"Better on the outside while running than on the inside like rats in a hole. Flee from the massacre!" was the reply, the last word ending in a scream.

"Massacre! massacre!" flew from lip to lip.

"To the gate!" they shouted, and ran for the West Gate. A score of hands tore away the mound of rocks and earth, while hundreds surged upon them from the rear, but the task was great, and being deserted by the soldiers, they fled in the direction of the South Gate, to pass through which would mean that the fugitives would have to race at least two miles in the face of the Japanese troops, but in the panic no one thought of that.

I hastened back to the Yi home, and was astonished at the number of women and even children that had remained in the city. Mothers with babies on their backs jostled with the soldiers and Korean

citizens, unnoticed. A helpless woman was being trampled upon. I dragged her to her feet, and without a word she joined the press. The night was intensely dark, but in that part of the city, out of view of the enemy, lights still hung from poles along the streets. On reaching Yi's home, I found, to my dismay, that the guard had gone, and on running through the building found it unoccupied save by looters in the persons of my own countrymen, loading themselves with everything of value. I rushed to the women's quarters, but they also were empty. Frantic with fear and disappointment, I ran from the compound to pursue the fugitives. On the outside I collided with a man wearing a silk coat, and recognized him as the governor's secretary. He was too much terrified to resent the shock.

"Where are you going?" I called.

"For the governor's seal of office," he gasped. "It was left in the care of Yi. Where is the treasury box?" he said, thinking I was a servant.

"Where is the governor?" I asked.

"At the South Gate in a chair; but the seal! the seal!"

I ran for the South Gate without replying, and looked into the face of everyone. I thought again and again that I had found the one I sought, but each time discovered the face of a stranger.

At the gates surged a great mass, Chinese and Koreans, fighting and trampling each other. In

the midst was the chair of the governor with its runners, ordering the people to clear the way, but no one paid any notice to his authority. He was driven from side to side like a tiny boat on a storm-swept sea. With a feeling of grim satisfaction, I saw him tumbled from his chair and trampled upon. Faithful servants dragged him to his feet and he was again borne aloft and crowded through the gate.

On the right and left, the gate was flanked with high walls which narrowed down at the entrance to a width of fifteen feet. It was at this point where the jam became greatest.

I crowded into the outgoing stream and was carried along, pressing my puny strength against it. At my feet, someone fell. There was a cry of pain, and the life was trampled out, and I barely escaped tripping over him. Twenty feet beyond, I was out of the gate where the passage was widened. On the right and left, houses crowded the street, but the verandas offered more room to the crowd which extended and surged along with slightly less force. The posts supporting the verandas offered obstructions, and against them the people were detained and suspended like floating grass clinging to trees in midstream. To one of these posts I was carried.

It was dark outside the gate and it would have been impossible to recognize one's nearest neighbor. My heart sank for I felt the impossibility of

finding Ewa, and I cursed myself for the folly of entering the irresistible human current.

I was swept up against a post and clung to it. Somebody was beneath my feet trying to rise. I reached low and seized the man by the arm. He struggled to his feet with a sputtering sound, as if he had been filling his mouth with earth.

"Are you all right?" he gasped as soon as he could speak. Evidently he was not addressing me, and then for the first time I noticed that there were hands on the post from somewhere on the other side. The voice was familiar. He spoke again. "O, Mayo!" I cried. "Yes, lad," he said; then we were swept along.

There was a scream, and the hands on the other side of the post relaxed. At the sound, I sprang to where I heard the voice and seizing a wrist followed the arm down to a prostrate figure. I locked my hands around the shoulders of the trampled victim and lifted with all my might. The act was with the impulse of instinct and worthy neither of praise nor blame. It required only a fraction of a second, yet I was being borne to the ground with my burden. I lifted till a thousand stars danced before my eyes, yet the merciless crowd trampled across the limbs of the half-prostrate girl like some fearful monster, relentless, fateful.

The slight obstruction we offered to the onrushing current divided at the post a few feet away, and

formed an eddy that swept us aside up against a building. Here I was able to lift her to her feet, and we leaned against the wall unable to speak for lack of breath. Repeated shocks from the crowd forced us to the end of the building, where to my joy the way opened, offering room for the multitude.

I noticed then for the first time that the struggle was going on silently, save for the rushing sound as of a herd of cattle escaping from close quarters into an open field. Men and women went down every moment, and their muffled cries were lost in the tramp of feet. As soon as I could get my breath, I asked, "Do you know me, Ewa?"

"Yes," she replied, her voice trembling with pain, and freeing herself from my hold, she tried to stand alone, but sank to the ground. Then I knew that she was injured.

There was no time to be lost. A great crowd had already preceded us, and if they should be discovered our fate would be sealed.

"On my back, Ewa, quick!" I urged.

"I am heavy," said she faintly.

"Quick! quick!" and I raised her to her feet and knelt with my back to her. She locked her arms around my neck and I arose.

"Heavy," said she. "Can you do it?"

"To the end of the world," I replied.

I turned northward, hoping to escape with the Chinese soldiers who were fleeing toward the Yalu River, five hundred li away.

"The Japanese must have had very simple confidence in the purpose of the Chinese to keep the terms of the armistice," I thought. It was evident that the army was fleeing for miles, within hailing distance of the Japanese troops, who seemed ignorant, or indifferent; but I was soon to learn that they would awake with vengeance.

I took a path that led close to the city wall, and pushed on separating ourselves from the crowd of fugitives. I knew that Ewa was suffering, but no sound came from her close-pressed lips. The great press at the gate had thinned out to only now and then a straggler in our vicinity.

I learned afterward that many had taken the opposite direction and plunged into the river, where, at low tide, it could be easily forded; but, missing their footing, were swept down the stream, and were seen the next day with upturned faces along the shore. Boatmen curiously seized black objects on the stream and brought to the surface ghastly faces, that made them scream with fear and hurry home to hide from the terrors of the water.

Our way was as still as death. Only the chirping of crickets and the song of the katydid disturbed the stillness. I set my light burden down to rest, and it seemed impossible that only a few hours ago,

the roar of battle had shaken the very ground upon which stood the walls that frowned in the darkness thirty feet above us. Out across the plain, a feeble light flickered, showing where the enemy was encamped. Somewhere in the dark, between us and the light, thousands of eyes were straining in our direction, and thousands of fingers were eagerly searching the trigger of the terrible *murata*. Death bristled before us in a multitude of forms. How sweet life seemed then! I inquired of Ewa if she were in pain.

"Pain is as one regards it. Even torture and death under some circumstances may be sweet. At a time like this, to acknowledge pain is to forfeit a right to live," said she in an even voice.

Marveling at the wisdom and courage of the untutored slave girl, I touched her hand reverently. She withdrew it, and I again knelt before her took her on my back, and on we went. We hurried northward, over the ancient mounds where tens of thousands had long ago been laid to rest, and to my distorted imagination, the mounds seemed to gape and yawn hungrily at my feet to receive the human sacrifice above.

"Where was old Mayo? Had he been trampled to death like many of our companions?" I asked myself. We had been separated the moment after meeting, and I longed for his companionship and advice.

Death seemed to hang upon the stillness, and I hastened my steps till my breath came in short gasps, compelling me to pause for a moment, and then on.

We passed through the gateway of the outer, ancient city, which for centuries had stood guard before a city long since dead. When we reached the road before these gates, we found ourselves again in a motley crowd, who, though having scattered and taken different paths, were reunited at this point. There were Chinese soldiers and Koreans, men, women and children fleeing silently into the dark. Out of the old gates and down the slope on the northern side we went to the Peking road, and hope began to dawn in my heart. A half hour more and we would be beyond the Japanese lines and safe.

Pausing again to rest, I put Ewa down and she pulled my sleeve. "See!" said she, "what is that?"

I looked out across the fields, and a dark line in the distance, having the appearance of a line of rocks, seemed to change position and move forward. "The enemy," I said hoarsely, and knelt for Ewa.

There was a flash that dazzled my eyes and a crash and roar as of thunder, followed by screams and moans. The road seemed to be filled with people. Some turned back, but most sped onward. Light sprang up from some source, revealing us to the murderous fire of the enemy. Men dropped singly and in groups everywhere. I stumbled over

someone, and a baby cried at my feet. It was tied to its mother's back, who lay still. I turned her over, wondering if she had fainted from fright. A red pool on the ground told the story. On I hastened and overtook a man seated on the ground holding the head of his aged father, whose face was marble white. A woman sobbed as she ran at my side. On her back was a two-year old child with its head dangling helplessly on one side. The mother lifted the babe in place and gazed with bulging eyes at her red hand, and wiped it across her skirts. In the gutter was the chair of the governor, and beside it lay two of the bearers. All these things struck into my mind, like a flash of light on the negative plate in a camera, and horror filled me. On I went—on past the belching hell of Japanese fire—on, with Ewa. The effort was prodigious, my breath came in gasps, and there was a ringing in my ears. Suddenly, a sheet of flame spread out before my eyes and I staggered. Ewa slid to the ground.

"On, on, Ewa! a few minutes more, and then safety!" I said. Then I realized that I was lying on the ground and that she was tying a band over my side where a warm stream was trickling down. The firing had now ceased, and the road was filled with the enemy moving from group to group looking at faces. A light was held close to my eyes, and someone seized Ewa's face and turned it upward;

then they passed to others and left us alone. I closed my eyes with weariness.

"Ewa," I said, "we must on. On to the old hermitage, Ewa, where the violets bloom, and where the sea whispers in the sun." Then I awoke from my dreams and mutterings. The light of dawn was breaking over the earth.

"Ewa," I said, "I wanted you. I gave up a life of ease to follow you. To serve as a slave at your side, though despised of men, would have been all I asked. Do not think I am not proud, but you were more than rank, wealth and parents to me—and I will soon be as one of these terrible pieces of clay over which we stumbled."

Ewa's big eyes were close to mine and tears fell fast upon my face.

"Some day, Ewa, where men's spirits roam, we will meet. I swear it, Ewa."

A prolonged "I-go" drew my attention to a bowed and weeping figure. I spoke to him.

"Don't weep, dear Mayo," I said. "You must be going. Take Ewa and flee. See, the light is growing brighter. Hurry, begone before she falls into the hands of the Japanese. Go! go!" I said, then I felt faint, the faces above me grew dark. She was speaking, but I did not hear, and when next I came to myself I was being carried on a stretcher between two Japanese toward the city. The jogging hurt me, and the sun shone in my eyes.

CHAPTER XV

Convalescence

They carried me to one of the old public buildings, and I was placed on a table under the hands of a surgeon and my wound probed and treated. I had expected to be dispatched in order to rid the army of a burden; but I saw a number under surgical treatment, not only Koreans, but also many Chinese soldiers. Mercy in warfare was a new idea to me and I marveled at it and was thankful.

I was ill many days. Some of them were a blank and dropped completely out of my life. Finally the confused dreams and mutterings passed away, and the heat and burning thirst were over, and I lay restful, but weak and sore. The surgeon examined me with a look of satisfaction, and when I looked over the bare room I saw that only a few still remained who had crowded it when I was first brought in. Day by day, I pushed back from Death's boundary line and was glad.

One morning I became conscious of someone sitting near my mat, yet beyond my view; then I remembered that I had felt a familiar presence during my illness like a shadow of an old friend, and had often tried to talk to it. I struggled to look

back of me, when a large hand was laid upon my face and a command to be quiet came in a dear, familiar voice. I pulled the hand down to my lips and in my weakness tears flowed down upon it. "Tong-siki," I said, "dear Tong-siki."

"Hush," he interrupted, "or they will drive me away. Indeed, if you cry or say a word, I will leave you."

His threat dried my eyes, and I looked up in his face without a word.

"You are better," said he, "and I am here to care for you as much as they will allow me, and when you have recovered I will take you away. I have many things to tell you and many questions to ask, but your strength will not allow it now. Once I lost you at sea, and then I found you dying here, yet you are still alive. I am content to wait. Listen, obey your surgeon implicitly and all will be well."

He withdrew and sat on the mat beyond my head, out of my sight, and when the surgeon entered he spoke to Tong-siki in Japanese, and to my surprise, he replied in the same language.

From that day Tong-siki became my nurse, but it was a long time before he would reply to a word addressed to him. One day he raised me to a sitting position and sat down at my feet.

"Now," said he, "I will talk with you." And after a few minutes of aimless talking, as if to get

my dull wits together, he said, "No doubt you are anxious to hear some news from your old home. The war disturbed them little. Scouts penetrated the vicinity of your town and some of them paid your home a visit. A few supplies satisfied them and they committed few depredations. Your mother is well, but your father is ill. Getting old, you know, and he has never been quite the same since you were lost on the river."

I opened my lips to speak, but he shook his head and continued. "No doubt you will see him alive, that is, if you care to," he added, looking hard in my face. "Never mind," he said, quickly, "I see I don't know how to treat the sick.

"You have a ready tongue, Sung-yo, and when the machinery of the upper story is out of order, it wags industriously. You had a vast amount to say about hunchback, slave girl, hermitage and 'Run, Ewa, run.' Some of your story is clear, but I will wait patiently for the rest."

This he said in his energetic, kindly tone. He reached for my hand. It still showed the marks of toil. Then he laughed, one of those delightful, infectious laughs.

"You may have made mistakes, but you have tried to be honest," he said. "It is a strong character that chooses poverty and distress where it may have wealth and comfort."

I felt my face redden with shame, for I knew that my voluntary abasement came from a consuming passion, and not from an unselfish principle. Thus had I left my father to suffer over my supposed death.

"Well, well," he said, soothingly, and rose to go. "We will talk later."

I watched him pass out of the building, feeling that the surgeon's knife, that had so often brought a groan from my lips, had unconsciously, in Tongsiki's hands, been thrust into a vital spot, and had uncovered all my diseases. I closed my eyes and Ewa's face looked at me, then was I angry at Tongsiki, and made a vow down deep in my heart, and I asked the spirits to register it. "If ye are good," I said, "then register it where the light streams out in the golden beams of the morning's dawn, where there is promise of hope and victory. If evil, then register it in the underworld, where darkness holds sway and shadows run riot, where misery is king and all his realm is suffering. Register my vow, you shades of light or darkness. I will measure my will with fate. I shall possess her, whether for weal or woe."

The excitement had exhausted me, and the next day I wanted to remain quiet, and I lay all day wondering what had become of Ewa and old Mayo.

Ten days later I was carried to a boat that was moored outside of the great East Gate. As I was

carried through the city, I noticed that half of it lay in ruins. Few troops were present, and only a few merchants were beginning to return. The silence was oppressive. Not even a dog barked on the streets.

As we drifted up the river under the sturdy pulling of our boatmen, the warm October sun brought a feeling of returning life and gladness.

Tong-siki told me the incidents that had transpired since we had parted on the river that eventful day. He had gone to the capital soon afterward, on business for my father, and while there, had acquainted himself with all the dissatisfied, disgruntled politicians and had listened to their stories.

"Few there were," he said, "who seemed to have the slightest desire for reform. Those who worked for reform did so like anarchists with powder and dynamite." Finding choice spirits, he had proposed his ideas of a combined action of the more powerful families of the realm, but was regarded as a dreamer.

"Who," they asked, "being secure in his possessions, would hazard them for a dream? No, no," they said, "if reforms are necessary, let the people rise in a multitude as numerous as the ants in an ant hill and hurl the tyrant from his throne. Power lies in the aggregation of many atoms, and not in a few, even though those few individuals were strong."

"All this," Tong-siki added, "has been tried again and again for centuries, and even since our day there have not been lacking times when the mob sought rule in the hope of reform. There is not cohesive force enough in Korean society to hold it together for concerted action, nor is there honesty enough in such would-be reformers to make it safe for anyone to lead an organization against the government. To-day, they are ready to swear fealty to the cause; to-morrow, for fear of those in power, they are anxious to betray it and the lives of their associates. We adorn our houses and every wayside shrine with rags, and bow down to them; but the greatest fetish, worshiped blindly by all our people, is rank. A despised beggar, kicked from beneath one's feet to-day, will be honored to-morrow, if by any accident he receives the attention of royalty.

"While in the capital during the last few months, I knocked my head on the floor to more fools, more maudlin drunkards, more empty vanity than I had supposed the country contained. To wear a silk coat, smoke a long pipe, grow long finger nails, to be able to boast of moral rottenness, to strut on the streets, is the insatiable ambition of the multitudes of the capital. While boasting of being experts in political intrigue, they are neither clever nor shrewd. Their statesmanship is the mediocrity of the maudlin drunkard. When a vicious political scheme is

promulgated and put into operation, no one is surprised, for before it gets under way, all understand it; and when it wrings blood from the people the promulgator is praised by his associates for his astuteness, and what is more astonishing, the common people adore him for his power. The people crouch before these tyrannical fools like whipped dogs, ready to turn and lick their hands as soon as their masters snap their fingers for attention.

"I have been using foreign tobacco to get rid of the nausea of the capital. The tobacco made me sick in good earnest, but I felt better afterward." I laughed at Tong-siki's explosion, but he looked out over the river without a smile.

"Of course that is not all," he added. "We have a few great men, or rather men with great capabilities who are earnestly looking forward with the expectation of doing something for our people, but a nation moves slowly. If the present conditions obtain during another decade our independence, for which the Japanese are so fond of saying they have been fighting, will be the independence of slaves." Lowering his voice, he continued:

"My country's needs fill my days with longings and besiege my nights like a beleaguered city. I believe I am experiencing the feelings of many of my countrymen who are ready to give up home, parents, wives, children, and life, also, for this cause."

I searched his face carefully, but the noble sentiment that had inspired his words left no sign of a secondary meaning. Yet the rebuke stung me to the quick.

"What is the matter?" he asked, searching me from head to foot, for in spite of me the flush deepened over my face.

"What did you say about giving up?" I asked, uneasily.

He laughed heartily, but noticing my frown, replied with the kindly air of one humoring a sick person:

"You think women may be a help in our struggle, do you? or rather, you think the slave girl would help you. I need not remind you," he continued in an amused tone, "of the status of our women. Do we ever think enough of a girl to give her a name? A woman in our country has no more personality than a horse or an ox."

"You forget her Majesty," I said.

"Quite right," he replied. "If we could all marry queens."

"But," I persisted, "could not a good woman who is in sympathy with her husband's motives be of service, even in this great cause?"

"Perhaps so," he said, wearily. "If he has not strength and courage of his own, of what worth would such a man be, anyway? The land is full of men that need to be bolstered up by women. There

are many who have little more vigor than an oyster, and the vision of a strong woman would put them to flight."

"Pity we have not one of the sages to write your tale of love. We hear of men falling in love with their wives after they have a family prattling at their knees, and I have seen men enamored by dancing girls and become victims of their insane imagination in other ways, but I never heard of a young man falling in love with a woman who was a stranger, much less a slave, and follow her about, as a dog his master. They say in the Western world, where they boast of their civilization, that such things are common; but they have many strange customs, to follow which is little less dangerous than drinking their wines."

"Who was it," I replied, "that advised me not to marry the deformed idiot for the sake of gain? Who was it that encouraged me to lay aside my habits of effeminacy and was delighted when I cut my long finger nails? Who was it that has grown eloquent in declaring that all classes should be equal, and if I have shown the fruits of your doctrine, why do you complain? If I am ready to follow her like a dog his master, as you say, and capable of giving up comforts of home, hope of rank, becoming a coolie and offering my life to satisfy my ambition, does it argue that I am less capable of devoting myself to any cause, great and

good? Am I less true to you than I was before knowing her? Have I refused to become heir to my father's estate if he chooses to make me such? and have I not already dedicated it all to our cause as well as my influence as a son of the great Sung-ji?"

"Alas, my poor boy!" he said, "the heirship has already passed from you and not a cash of the estate could you get, though you begged on your knees for it. Your father heard of your attachment for the slave and fixed the inheritance upon your brother, where, indeed, it naturally belongs, according to our custom. So that if you are to be of aid in the great movements that are pending, it will be because of your own personal devotion. I could wish, however, that you had united with some powerful family to help our cause; yet while I laugh at you, Sung-yo, and may have regrets, I shall be your friend, and we shall fight and win on the same field."

"Who informed my father of my whereabouts?" I asked.

"Ho-yongi made him a visit, I understand, and your brother gave him some money for his disinterested friendship.

"During the battle of Pyeng-Yang, Ho-yongi fled with the governor; but when he learned that the Japanese did not seek the lives of Koreans, he returned and tried in every way to ingratiate himself with the Japanese officials, counseling them to

squeeze certain persons of whose secrets he was the sole possessor. Not waiting for their action, he did a little of that work on his own account; but hearing that the Japanese were on the point of apprehending him, he found it convenient to visit your father."

"Did he tell my father that I was wounded?"

"O, no, simply that you were searching after an ex-slave with whom you had long been enamored, but separated from by the accident of war. He urged your father not to think too hardly of you, as your youth should be taken into consideration; that it distressed him to bring such ill news, but he thought it was due so loving and indulgent a father to know the whole truth; that there were many young men who went wrong on visiting the great cities without proper associates to keep them right, not that he wished to charge the much trusted Tong-siki with the young man's fall, but great care should be exercised. Indeed, if his Excellency would pardon one, who out of a sense of duty was ready to run the risk of making himself an unwelcome visitor, whose one motive was to save the great man from imposition and sorrow, he would make bold to speak more plainly. When his Excellency's son was in Pyeng-Yang, before the accident on the river, he had been discovered raiding the women's quarters of a certain inn, led by his trusted friend. What more natural thing than,

when a river accident made it possible to cause it to appear that he was lost, for him to join his paramour?

"'Do you know that?' the old man had gruffly asked.

"O, no, indeed; he would not say a word to give his Excellency a moment's uneasiness. No doubt it was all report. He simply said, what more natural thing for him at that time than to have joined the one he is now with? He would go, now that he had thrust himself unwittingly where he was not wanted. 'Strange,' he added, with a sigh, 'how easy it is to be misunderstood. One's best effort of disinterested solicitude may, at best, be a mistake.' He would leave.

"After repeated protest from members of the family he consented to stay a week. He stated that while he was much sought after by the Japanese officials in Pyeng-Yang, yet friendship was a precious plant that grew not in every yard, and in these disturbed times, he who would not sacrifice for friendship deserved to be classed among traitors. He stayed a week, then two weeks.

"The settlement of the property took place at that time and he became very friendly with your brother, and when he left, it required a pony to carry away the cash he had on hand. No one seemed to know where he obtained it, for when he arrived, he brought nothing."

"You have kept these things from me a long time," I said.

"No longer than necessary. If I had told you while you were in the hospital, you never would have had need of a fortune, and if I had told you before leaving, your pride would have prevented your returning. You will come now and make wrongs right as far as you can," he added gently, "but the estate of course is beyond you."

CHAPTER XV

The New Faith

During the following afternoon an accident happened to the boat, compelling us to tie up for twenty-four hours. The inn was a mile away, and I surprised myself by walking the whole distance.

When we arrived, a curious commotion was taking place in the village. People were hurrying from all directions toward a school building situated on the outskirts of the town. Someone was shouting, "Foreigner! foreigner! Let's see the foreigner!"

Teachers of the new religion had followed closely on the footsteps of the victorious army, and here was one already preaching in a schoolhouse many miles from the open ports.

Our curiosity led us to the door, and Tong-siki made an opening in the crowd and pulled me after him. Sitting down in the doorway, we found ourselves in the midst of a great crowd of jostling sightseers. When our eyes became accustomed to the semidarkness, caused by the doors and windows being filled with curious persons, and the tobacco smoke from the industrious occupants of the floor, we could see the foreigner seated in the place of honor, the hottest part of the schoolhouse floor.

He was not the man that I had seen in Pyeng-Yang. While he was quite as tall, his hair was light. It seemed to be the impression of many present that he could not understand Korean, at least there was little said that was complimentary. His appearance reminded one in a startling manner of our old ideas of the appearance of his Satanic Majesty. His light complexion with a red cast, caused by the heat of the room, and very light hair reminded his audience humorously of the imaginary figure of the devil often drawn on screens in many of our homes, and it was not surprising that the words, "Foreign devil," were whispered about the room. Those sitting nearest, crept closer and felt of his clothes, hands, and feet, and repeatedly asked, "Has he no sense? Can he talk? Do you think he would teach us to talk American?" It was evident that he was waiting for their curiosity to cease, and presently he inquired the names of some who were sitting nearest him. Others he had met before and seemed on terms of good understanding with them. When he spoke, the company received a shock of surprise at the good Korean he used. Finally, he asked them to lay aside their pipes and listen, as he had something of importance to say. He observed that many were standing on the outside, unable to get in; and that they had nearly ruined the good teacher's windows and doors by punching holes through them, to which they had fixed their eyes.

"It would," he said, "be a great pleasure if they would swing all the doors open and thereby save them from further ruin, and allow all on the outside to listen."

I am glad to testify to the courtesy of that company of farmers who laid aside their pipes, a mark of respect paid only to officials.

The preacher talked a great deal of that with which I have since become familiar; but, at that time it was utterly incomprehensible. He said, among many other things, all men were sinners, which was the work of the evil spirit. In response to the statement a titter passed among his listeners because of the speaker's likeness to that spirit. He dwelt long on the power of a supreme being called Yasu, who had once been a human being and had died to save men. My curiosity had not been less than that displayed by others, and I stared fixedly at the face of the strange apparition.

When he closed the talk, arrangements were made for him to eat his supper. That was the most fascinating part of the whole proceeding. Tong-siki immediately withdrew, but I stayed. We were not aware of any rudeness; so there we waited and stared at the man, his table of food, much of which he had brought with him, at the fork he used, following it with our eyes as he conveyed it to his mouth, watched him as he moved his lips, wondered what his food was like, and if it tasted good. Pres-

ently, he threw back his head and laughed heartily, and we all responded with a foolish grin.

"Dear friends," said he, "I like to have you look at me. I know I am a strange creature among you, and I want you to see all I do, but while you are gazing will you not please wink once in a while?"

I felt ashamed and a little shocked as if someone had rudely awakened me from a pleasant dream, and I was dissatisfied with the man and disliked his light hair and red face. He had announced that there would be another gathering in the evening; and would everybody come? I resolved at first not to go, but afterward thought better of it, and when the candles were lighted found myself seated on the floors at one end of the building, with Tong-siki at my side. To my utter amazement, one half of the building was filled with women without a screen separating them from the men. The room was filled with serious people. On the outside, however, the sightseers swarmed and jostled at the doors. During the long discourse that followed, he spoke with great force and assurance, and moved his hands in gesticulation that held our attention with mesmeric power. He was pleading as if it were for our lives before a judge who had condemned us. The speaker's eyes were even filled with tears, and at the close of the long, impassioned appeal, he called:

"Yasu will give you life, life, life!" The company swayed back and forth with the steadiness of a

pendulum, denoting the profoundest absorption. "Believe Yasu, and to-night, you will have the gift of eternal life," said he. An old man seated behind me bent his head on my shoulder and began to sob as if he had lost his nearest friend, or rather, more like a child crying for his mother. Others followed him rapidly, and to my utter bewilderment, the whole company were soon bowed to the floor, weeping as if their hearts would break. Tong-siki and I alone sat up and seemed miserably out of place. I glanced at Tong-siki. On his face was the gravity of a Buddha. A delirium of ecstacy took possession of many present. They stood on their feet and declared that the Yasu was within them, and recounting all their horrible crimes against themselves and others, declared that their guilt was gone, and that they loved the good. Again and again, someone would say, "Eternal life is mine, mine, mine!"

Tong-siki touched me on the shoulder and we quietly worked our way out of the door and returned to the inn. Other guests were lying on the bare floor, and it was with some difficulty that we were able to get a place large enough for us both. Tong-siki made no remarks, and I finally stretched myself out for the night. He sat there, thoughtfully gazing at the candle, fingering his pipe which he had forgotten to light. Thus I saw him later in the night when I awoke, with the light and shadows playing hide-and-seek across his handsome face. I noted his

thoughtful sincerity and I warmed to him with the devotion of a young heart to its hero. Thus I see him always as I gaze back through the shadows of events; fearlessly attacking all problems, sometimes seeming to suffer defeat, but never flinching.

CHAPTER XVI

Home

Two days later we landed near my old home, and my heart was full as I looked upon old, familiar scenes. I paused on the bank where the overhanging trees had often shaded me as a boy, in my gambols with my companions, and with the early autumn breeze, I could almost hear the lute of old Mayo. The sun brightly warmed the path leading from the river, and autumn flowers nodded to me everywhere. The brook at my side, which for many years had contended with the path for the right of way, sang as merrily as when it beguiled me with hook and line long ago. How my heart leaped as I caught sight of the old home. It spread out in the old familiar way, like a great hen trying to cover her brood that daily grew beyond her motherly ambition.

Laborers who had been my playmates in childhood, were at work in the fields. They saw us—one started, then another, then all came pellmell to meet us. Tears came to my eyes when I saw that they were glad to meet the disinherited and disgraced son of the old Sung-ji. My brother came and took my hand, and we walked together. As we

stepped through the huge outer gate, I turned and looking into his face, said: "I know, it is yours, and you are welcome." He dropped his eyes and said nothing.

I found my mother; she sat down with me and cried, held my hand and patted it, looked at the marks of toil, and into my face made thin by sickness, then touched my cheeks with her fingers, and cried again. She took off my rough sandals with her own hands, and as she laid them away, caressed them. She ran her fingers over my forehead tenderly, and through my hair, taking note that it had been cut short by the surgeon at the hospital. Then she murmured, "Dear Sung-yo!" I took her cheeks between my hands and held her eyes to mine.

"Look, mother, what do they tell you?" I asked, "My life is just as pure and my hands just as clean as they were the day I left you."

Then I told her the whole story from the time I had parted from her for our trip to Pyeng-yang, which seemed now so long ago. I hid nothing. I showed her the scar in my side. She placed her fingers on it and cried again. All that was noble in me responded to her touch and tears.

I found my father very ill. The sorceress had again done her duty, with the result that she had a well-filled cash box, and he was worse for the wear and noise. He was bolstered up on silk cushions and looked so thin and helpless that my conscience

smote me sorely for my long absence. I knelt by the side of his bed, and he spoke to me in the old tender tone, and as I looked into his face his lips twitched slightly, and in his weakness tears trickled down his cheeks.

"Tong-siki has told me," said he, "and I am glad that you are not guilty of crime against the name of your father."

I sat by his side the rest of the day and told him of my escape from the river, the sea, and the terrors of the war. I could not bring myself to tell of Ewa. My mother could understand, but could he? Then, too, he was weak, and would it not cause his death? As I thought the matter over, I grew cowardly and held it back. He spoke with some heat of the snake, Ho-yongi.

"Wait," said he, "when I get up I will look after him." But he did not get up. "To-morrow," he would say, but on the morrow he would wait for the next day.

Finally, after a long consultation with Tong-siki he called my brother and me before him. We dutifully placed our heads to the floor in salutation and waited for him to state his will. He told us to come nearer, and we knelt at his side. Then in a weak voice which sounded so strangely unlike him, he told us of his life, his struggles, and his triumphs; of the glorious period when he stood at the side of his Majesty, and the Korean world was at his feet.

His eyes sparkled as he told of the humiliation of his haughty enemies in the South country.

"But alas!" said he, "my influence has been waning for several years, and now that the war has revolutionized affairs my influence at the court has gone. Some of my enemies have suffered with me; but there are many waiting for me to enter the Yellow Valley that they may have the opportunity to seize all I have. It is true that I have not been without faults, and there may be some who have grounds for complaint, but they will make a mountain out of a mole hill." Turning to my brother, he said:

"Chang-yo, I placed the property in your hands some time ago. So it must remain. You can, because of your experience, defend it better than your brother. There are, however, rice lands near the city of Pyeng-Yang which yield some profit, they will go to Sung-yo. Tong-siki, our faithful friend, has the disposition in writing under my seal. Observe my commands in this matter." He lay thinking awhile, then continued:

"My funeral must be befitting my rank, that my enemies may not scoff. Bury me on the mountain by the side of your grandfather, a place already marked by the necromancers, promising well for me and fortunes for you. Did not the spirits deal kindly with the son of your grandfather, and may they not deal well with the sons of your father also?

"The Yi family of Chung-ju, I fear, has lost everything. You need not further consider that marriage, Sung-yo. Remember my commands. Your mother and Tong-siki have this matter in hand, and will arrange a proper alliance that will bring honor to the family name. The great changes introduced by the successful Japanese may open a way for governmental preferment. If that should be the case, do not, simply out of hatred for our old enemies, or for fear of a struggle with them, refuse to take advantage of any such opportunity. Watch your friends and your enemies, and take advantage of every means to firmly establish the family name, that it may be honored through all time. The shades of your ancestors are looking down upon you. Do not disappoint them."

That night when the rest were sleeping, I crept in and told him of Ewa. When I was through he turned to the wall, and I crawled away feeling like an assassin.

Two days later, there was weeping throughout our home, weeping that could be heard down by the river, and passing boatmen whispered the name of Sung-ji. Some were sad, while others smiled, to some it meant the loss of a protector, and to others, I fear, it meant release from oppression.

We followed his wishes, and the funeral was an elaborate one. No bier in the neighborhood was pretentious enough, so we had a new one built.

Some of the neighbors said, "that which was good enough for the father ought to be good enough for the son." Others said that "when the pillars of a house become rotten, men always put new tiles on the roof," meaning that we were making a show to cover our poverty. The magistrate expressed his sympathy by sending a letter of condolence, and his runners to take note of our possessions. The latter seemed to augur ill for our future. We hired a hundred and fifty mourners to carry the largest bier ever constructed in the North country. That instrument consisted of two long timbers over which was built a framework covered with rich silks, painted with gaudy figures, illustrating the mystic forms of our ancient religion.

After thirty days of preparation, we took our solemn journey to the mountain. Some of those, whose little holdings had found their way into our estate and had often spoken bitterly of my father, were there to help carry the great man to his final resting place. A line of hired mourners preceded the bier carrying long trailing paper lanterns in gaudy colors, suspended on poles. Immediately in front of the bier marched a bell ringer. He spun round and round like a boy's top, frantically ringing his bell. My mother wept in her rooms, for women never follow their loved dead to the grave. At the rear of the procession followed my brother and I in palanquins, and behind us other relatives of the

SUNG-YO DRESSED IN MOURNING FOR HIS FATHER

Sung-ji. On the top of the bier, in front of an awning, sat a man employed to give directions to the company of mourners. He would improvise a stanza of doleful sentiment and all would join in and chant it after him; then whenever there was a pause, the time would be filled up with prolonged wailings of "I-go-o-o." The whole country responded to the cries of mourning, and turned out to see us lay away the remains of the great Sung-ji. Many of the bearers had devoted so much time at the shrine of Bacchus that they were unable to make the whole journey, but it did not interfere with our progress and no one cared. When we arrived at the mountain side preparations for the burial were completed; a delay occurred because from fear of the dead, the laborers were drinking and quarreling as if high altercations were the best expression of homage to the memory of the greatest man who had lived during a period of three centuries.

We had gone out in the early evening, and it was still dark when we returned. A large number collected in our apartments to while away the remaining hours of the night, that we might not have to endure the terror of meeting the departed spirits alone.

The family had dressed in the coarse hemp of mourning, and was conscious of special politeness on the part of our neighbors.

Tong-siki had superintended the funeral arrange-

ments, and we felt grateful for the order and completeness with which all things were carried through. As a distant relative of the family he joined the mourners, but seemed apart from the whole scene, and it was remembered afterward that he did not join in the loud wailings, though his eyes were red and he bore the expression of genuine sorrow.

The ancestral tablet was duly erected in the room where my father had died, and became an object of reverence, and at stated periods, it was worshiped. The great house became silent and lonely, and many of the hangers-on left when they found that the hand that had so long fed them was withdrawn.

Tenants announced that they were going to leave, secretly hoping to secure better treatment under the new regime. Hardly were the funeral affairs settled before people, suffering real or imaginary wrongs, united to demand redress and compensation for losses of previous years, and our home seemed to be tottering about our ears. The figures which they named were astonishing. They found their master in Tong-siki, and after a conference with him disbanded; then small presents streamed in as peace offerings. When the danger had passed, Tong-siki visited them individually and made careful inquiries into their complaints. He satisfactorily righted their wrongs with a small fraction of what they had demanded. The act amazed the people, and they repeated to each other ancient stories

of justice exercised by those in power. Thus wisely did Tong-siki secure its dues to the estate, retain the regard of the tenants, and in great measure redress their real grievances.

Tong-siki turned over the affairs of the Sung-ji estate to the proper heirs. My brother begged him to remain and administer the estate, but Tong-siki said that he had other duties, the character of which would endanger the safety of all who might be associated with him. The statement was repeated by neighbors and they revived the old report that Tong-siki was a dangerous man, and some day, would head a revolt against the government.

We had laid the Sung-ji to rest, but his control over the home had by no means ceased. All our actions were dictated by the iron hand that was fast turning to dust. His control was felt in the formalities of our home life, dictated by ancient laws; in the vocabulary of those who addressed us; we could neither travel nor engage in any form of business. We complied cheerfully with these laws, but the corroding thought that Ewa might have fallen into the hands of the Japanese soldiers, and that I was powerless to search for her, gnawed its way down into my soul, making me miserable and uncompanionable.

CHAPTER XVII

The Search

The winter passed, and vast changes were announced in the government. The old abuses were to be done away with. The magistrates were recalled from the interior, and other men, who were supposed to take the changes seriously, were put in their places. Tong-siki was at the capital in the midst of the new political activity, not as an official, but studying and watching the trend of affairs.

"It seems to me," he wrote, "that the reforms are on the surface, and from his Majesty down are acceded to from compulsion, and not from choice. I hope, however, that the new spirit will get such a start before the natural reaction takes place, that we shall be able to weather the storm."

Under the necessity of looking after our rice fields, the iron laws of mourning were allowed to relax, so that spring found me back in the city of Pyeng-Yang. By selling one of my fields, I collected means to prosecute the search for Ewa. In the city there was not a trace of her, or of the rich Yi. Believing that she would seek the protection of his home, and knowing that he had made friends with the governor, I concluded that they could be

found at the capital. Then, changing my mind, I made a trip to the Chinese border, inquiring in every hamlet for information of the old minstrel and his young companion; but the people having been driven from their homes, had only returned at the close of the war, and could give me no information regarding them. The summer was well advanced when I found my way to the capital. Cholera was raging in the city, and hundreds had already been carried out, and placed among multitudinous mounds beyond the city wall.

I found Tong-siki in the storm center of the country, and, to my great surprise, among conservative statesmen as a learner and an instructor. Many were coming to this rugged, brainy man of the North for counsel. I learned that the country was helpless in the hands of its old enemy, the Japanese. They had taken possession of the army and our national independence was threatened. While they introduced many reforms which seemed salutary, yet their insidious hand of greed seemed to be closing on the throat of our national life. Everywhere Japanese citizens clashed with Koreans, always to the confusion and rout of the latter. Wherever Korean laborers were employed in gangs by the Japanese, the club swung and blood flowed freely, and my people were the victims. Then I knew why Tong-siki had become a conservative reformer. I found him living with a man by the name

of Cho, who had opened his large house for the reception of such officials as needed a quiet place from the prying eyes of the enemies of reform. He occupied a small room and received me with great gladness. After the usual salutations and kindly inquiries he said:

"I have been waiting to see you a long time; you have come opportunely to take part in scenes that will be epoch-making in the history of this country, and perhaps the Eastern world. How well you look!" said he, in his genial way. "What inspired the trip? You will stay, of course, and take part in these affairs."

"That depends," I replied, "whether or not my interests can be promoted by remaining."

"Your interests!" he ejaculated,—"ever the same; 'my, mine,'—is the curse of our country. What is it you want? A magistracy, governorship, or perhaps you are looking for a place in his Majesty's Cabinet? You are not the only one ambitious and lacking modesty as to fitness. There are many who are willing to sacrifice themselves and all their remarkable talents to the good of the country if their salary is sufficient, but I had not known that you were ready to add your wisdom to the multitude of advisers who are daily waiting upon his Majesty. Have you found any trace of her?" he abruptly asked, sobering instantly from his good-natured raillery.

"No?—I have a great desire to see her," said he, "she certainly must be remarkable. You say a slave, Sung-yo? Tell me something more of her. Are you really still determined?" His face was all kindliness, and I had need of sympathy.

"Of her beauty, and intelligence, and mental charms I have nothing to say, for to bring my idols and place them at another's feet is not to invite reverence, nor am I expecting anyone to see through my eyes, not even so sympathetic a friend as you, Tong-siki. You ask if I am still determined? A few days ago, in one of my journeys, faint and exhausted, I threw myself on the ground and took from my bag the last crumb that I had, and as I nibbled slowly, that it might last the longer, a tiny crumb fell to the ground, and immediately an ant not larger than the crumb, seized it and began dragging it to its home. Hardly had it started before it was pounced upon by a larger specimen of the ant tribe, then a battle royal began. They fought till at last the large adversary lay still on the sand. I watched the victor crawl back to the crumb and lie down by the side of it, dead. In this insect tragedy, Tong-siki, I took courage and shall fight on, and shall possess her, though death should be the crown of my victory. I have sought her over hills and across plains, through heat and cold, and always her voice has beckoned me on. In the lights and shadows her form always just eluded my grasp. It

was ever just over the next hill, just across the next plain. Ah! Tong-siki, do you know aught of her and the rich Yi, or of old Mayo?" I had leaned forward and was looking into his eyes, and when he spoke it was with great gentleness.

"No, Sung-yo; I have heard nothing. You will win. But—"

"But, what?" I asked.

"There is something nobler, of which you have not thought." Again he paused.

"I am listening," I replied.

"You are battling for the sake of personal gratification. If it were for a principle, how much more noble! Then you would renounce your present purpose, and fight down the passion, and become worthy to be a leader of our people. To live for one's self is a passion of the generation. Think, Sung-yo, the multitudes here are like the swine at the feeding troughs. They have never learned the lessons of our ancestors, nor those which their better nature dictates. Renunciation, Sung-yo, is a doctrine of the ancient masters. Do you not remember the Christians' meeting? Did not the Westerner urge renunciation? They have improved upon our philosophy of 'self-repression' and command devotion to the good of others. The needs of the times show their teachings true. The times demand activity and strenuous zeal till the heart throbs in a consuming passion for others. You wear your life thread-

bare to satisfy a passion, and who is the better? The girl? Who is able to say so? Yourself? You may become satisfied, but that does not argue that you would be better. I am not asking you to repress the eagerness of your nature. I have learned better than to do so, but I would see it turned into other channels that it might bless many in need.

"I have been studying the secret of success of the Western nations. Their spirit I may not have learned any better than those nations have learned ours, but the closer I observe, certain facts become more clearly interpreted. While many of them are here, professedly, for friendly trade, they show a passion for our exploitation and treat us with contempt. I do not say that the Western people are great, for I know them only as aliens and my judgment may be influenced by prejudice. Greatness includes generosity, civility, politeness, all of which they lack; but their national ideal is sacrifice and their heroes have lived it. It is this fact that has made them free and powerful.

"Think of the millions of our countrymen who, under official oppression, are no better than slaves. Think of that foreign island race, whom we once despised, suddenly becoming powerful, daily treating us with contempt and insult, even while professing to be our friends, denying us the consideration due a foe. Think of the puerility of our statesmanship. We want men, Sung-yo; men."

He spoke with great earnestness and reminded me of a mountain torrent, not by its noise, but by its potential force.

"Our philosophy is not widely different," I replied. "It is strange to me that I, in pausing to pluck this wild flower, should fall behind in the race, or become less fit to join you in the great work of reform. Why should my zeal for your cause be a whit less? If you are hungry, you eat that you may have strength for heavy duties. If I have a passion of love, I must satisfy it that I may have heart sinew to battle for the unselfish ends of which you speak. On the other hand, think not, Tong-siki, that I am utterly selfish; would I not die for her?

"You have told me little of your early years, and slow would I be to walk roughshod into the quiet of your past; but if at that time you fell a victim to our ancient customs by having a bride chosen for you, one whom you had never seen, of course you loved her not; though I am far from saying that the memory of her grave is not tender, would it be presumptuous for me to infer that you are a stranger to the most holy of all passions, and its ennobling power, and in that case, incompetent to judge in this matter? As for the matter of sacrifice—if I were assured that renunciation would work her a benefit, then would I search for her no more. If sacrifice has a subjective benefit by fitting one for public duties could you ask more? Think of what her

helpfulness would mean—" then I paused, remembering what a slave-wife would mean in Korean society.

Tong-siki called loudly to a servant to bring our rice, generously covering my confusion. The servant appearing with the tables, put an end, for a time, to further conversation on that subject.

"It is probable," he added, after a while, "that if the rich Yi were in the city he would have made his presence known, for if my information regarding his history is correct he has been one of those who have an itching palm for official preferment. If he were here, unless hiding for some crime, he would try to take advantage of the reform movement to get into power. Fortune seems to be a facetious goddess, surprising the Outs and sometimes the lowly by putting them in, and hurling the Ins out."

"Would Yi figure as a reformer?" I asked.

"O! no, indeed. How refreshing your innocence is! Do you think questions of reform mean anything to these garbage eaters? If he is in the city he must be laying deep plans, and feels that his future is secure, otherwise we would have heard from him. He must have other resources than the friendship of the governor, for that gentleman is much in disgrace for not obeying his Majesty during the persecution of which you and I were witnesses. I advise you to begin combing the city, feeling assured that you will start any quantity of

vermin. No doubt from the mass you will recognize your enemy, or should I say friend? I myself will keep a lookout for this excellent gentleman. I can make public inquiries, while you had better work on the sly," he added, rising and adjusting his hat, and left me without a hint of how I should begin. My heart was warmed, for I knew that Tong-siki would indeed search the city, as it were, with a fine-toothed comb.

For days I stood at the gate of the palace, until I knew the names of every official who entered and returned, and learned much of their history and habits. I made the acquaintance of the servants of many wealthy people and those of rank, and joined in their gossip, hoping to gain the information I sought. Mornings I started out with high hopes, and nights returned dejected. Tong-siki greeted me each day with hearty cheerfulness, and deftly led our conversation away from the subject which burdened my mind, and was delighted when I talked glibly of the court officials, their habits and movements. He seemed determined to hear nothing about the slave, and I respected his wishes, knowing that he was not insensible to my feelings.

When he told me of his indefatigable efforts to form an association of the privileged class, who would stand together against both the Japanese and the party who were ready to sell Korea's best interests for personal gain, I was amazed at his prodi-

gious labors. At one time he would have a following that seemed to promise great things; and at another time all would leave him, and he would again, with infinite patience, labor on to win them back to his purpose. Again and again, with profound faith in his countrymen, he would lay before them the ideals of reform and pure government, only to see the edifice, when on the point of completion, crumble beneath his hands. They were ready to organize and make ventures for gain, but not for sacrifice. They loved their wealth and ease too dearly to jeopardize them in any scheme for reform. Still Tong-siki labored on—he made friends and many enemies. A position in the government service was offered him with the hope that he would be satisfied, but this he declined.

On several occasions, by making friends of officials' servants, I entered the palace grounds and familiarized myself with the location of the buildings and their occupants, but my search was fruitless. At the end of weeks of searching I returned to Tong-siki one evening, more discouraged than I had ever been, resolving that I would quit the search in the city and journey north across the Chinese border, where rumor had it that many of the Korean refugees had fled after the battle of Pyeng-Yang.

As I entered our room, Tong-siki was sitting on his mat, soberly looking over a roll of paper, wrinkling his brow in perplexity, and so absorbed was he

that he took no notice of my entrance. For some time I watched him gaze at the outside of the roll, as if he expected to solve a mystery from its polished surface. Presently he glanced up and smiled a welcome, then turned to the contemplation of the roll of paper.

"The empty mind and a blank book," I observed, quoting one of our classics.

"Yes?" said he, absently laying the roll in his open palm, "this is one of the many I have received during the last month, and that fact robs this one of much importance—rumors, only rumors."

"What rumors?"

"Nothing new," he replied. "Since I have been in Seoul I have heard of little but insurrections and rebellions originating within the capital, and again out in the country, murder of members of the cabinet, regicide, violence and bloodshed, always and incessantly. Come here," he added, "these walls have more ears than can be found in a drove of donkeys, or at the national examinations. Beneath every pair of ears wags an industrious tongue, you know. Look here!" said he, lowering his voice to a point more difficult to hear than a whisper. "I hold in my hand supposed information of a plot against the lives of members of the royal family, and for the extinction of the present dynasty. It incriminates the most powerful men in the realm, and also the Japanese Minister. I think it is a canard, yet if

certain officials knew that I had such a communication in my possession, it would cost me my head. I might not object to losing so valuable a part of my anatomy, if, in doing so, I could do any definite good. I do not know from whom this communication comes. It was slipped into my hand while I was passing out of the palace grounds about two hours ago. It is a specimen of a great many that have come to me in circuitous ways, but have proved utterly groundless suspicions. The burden of the letter is, that the father of the King purposes to secure the aid of the Japanese, or rather become the tool of the Japanese Minister, for the destruction of the Queen, and perhaps the whole royal family. That the old regent would be ready to dispose of the Queen who has long stood in his way, is evident, but that he should want to destroy the dynasty is absurd; that the Japanese should contemplate so enormous a crime is unthinkable, especially as their influence here depends upon winning the good will of our people. The moment that they should try to lay hands on the persons of their Majesties, Japan's influence is destroyed, and only by the force of arms could she hope to control our affairs. The contents of this roll, I think, are simply the vaporings of a diseased mind. How morbidly our people dream!" he added, as he lighted a match and touched it to the roll of paper. He then gazed at the black mass and scowled at it as if still trying to wrench from the

smoke information of the alleged plot. Plainly, in spite of his assuring words, he was not at ease. He watched the last ring of smoke curl lazily upward, and then looked me over quizzically, and his next words, for a time, drove utterly from my mind the threat contained in the charred roll.

"Now," said he, "I have seen your friend, the rich Yi."

"Seen him!" I gasped.

"I saw him coming from the palace grounds," he added, looking me over with the air of a connoisseur. "He was in company with a eunuch and a palace official with whom I have a slight acquaintance; indeed, I had found track of him two days ago, and to-day I stood a long time at the palace gate waiting for his appearance. I had urgent business away, but remembering your foolish ambition and pinings, called upon my stock of patience. When they appeared, I joined them, and by dint of insinuations, made myself known to Mr. Yi. He seems to be gazing high. He carried his chin on an angle with the rafters of the houses; his stride is not excelled by the most artistic strutter in the capital; he steps high with stiffened knees and glances along the line of his flat nose; as he expands, the rotundity of his fat body is enough to paralyze the presumption of any young man. Certain it is that if the poor, helpless Emperor should once get a view of this impressive piece of dignity, he would be un-

able to resist it. Royal rank would be compelled to protest its unworthiness, and hasten to crown him with all possible honors. He seemed surprised that I was not overcome with his importance, and I fear I pricked a good deal of his vanity by asking him of many of his poor relations, and how they got along with their paddyfields. I was particularly solicitous of the one who fell from the back of his bull some time ago. Of course I did not know that any of his friends had been injured from such a fall, but I knew that he certainly did not know that there had not been such an accident. He looked uneasily at his companions and tried to talk of something else. So effectually did I prick his pride that he almost forgot his strident step, and excusing himself from his companions asked me to his palanquin. Of course I was properly and politely appreciative of his special regard for my company, and my memory of your needs led me to accept the forced invitation to follow him to his home. While I protested and begged to be excused from imposing myself upon his company, words that he struggled to recall fell from his lips repeating his invitation. I think I have never met anyone who so heartily hated me, and at the same time protested pleasure in a newfound friendship. I left him, after an hour's conversation, in a room filled with tobacco smoke, his hat and mangun[1] off, one sleeve pushed above his el-

[1] A headband of horse hair or bamboo

bow, the other hanging pathetically over his hand, suggestive of the struggle he had had to fight with one hand while yielding a surrender with the other. I never took quite so much delight in wringing and twisting the affairs of a man from him before. I hurled Confucian platitudes at him, until he grunted, and groaned, and nodded "yes" at things he wished he had studied when young, but did not care to say so. I hinted of knowledge I possessed of court life, and of power I held in my hands, till he was on the point of making friends; then I got in blows on his humble origin until he fell almost into a heap. As his dignity left him, I fear that mine began to bristle up under a pair of glasses which I keep about me for special occasions. At last his pomposity utterly left him, and he meekly asked me if I could help him in a plan he had launched. He gave me some information and I twisted his topknot, figuratively speaking, until I found what I was after. Eunuchs, I observed, are very good tools for some kinds of service, but, in general, he had better leave them alone. He at last told me that he had a beautiful daughter whom he had placed in the hands of an influential eunuch to train for service in the royal court, as he believed a vacancy would soon result from the death of an invalid palace woman. I asked him on what he relied for success.

"'Of course,' said he, 'I have remembered the man well in a substantial way, and have promised

more, but most of all, I depend upon the girl's beauty and brilliancy of mind. If he is able to bring her to the attention of the Queen, I have little fear of the results.'

"I asked if his daughter had any objection to going. He replied, that when he told her that she had the choice of going or of becoming the concubine of a certain old man, she consented to go, and left in a glad spirit."

"But," said I, as soon as Tong-siki paused, "Ewa, the slave girl, what of her? Did you wring anything from him regarding her?"

Tong-siki looked me over for a minute and then added, "Who do you think the certain old man is, and who do you think is his daughter?"

"O!" said I, and never before in all my maddening search did she seem so far from me. I had a thousand times rather run the gauntlet of the Japanese terrible *murata* and take the chances with Ewa, than attempt her rescue from the guarded palace enclosure. The chances for success with the former seemed a certainty compared with the latter.

When the evening meal was brought in, I pushed it from me and vacantly studied the mat at my feet.

"When and where does the raid take place?" I asked, a sudden thought bringing me to my feet.

"To-morrow night at the Kang-wha gate," he replied, looking at me inquiringly.

CHAPTER XVIII

Under Arrest

Late in the evening, I slipped out of the door, and when I looked back at Tong-siki, he was still studying the roll of charred paper, his brow knit in a frown. A gust of wind from the open door sent the ashes whirling about the room and he followed them with his eyes, while the shadows deepened in his handsome face.

I made my way to the gate that Tong-siki had named, led there by a feeling of intolerable restlessness and misery. I stood for a long time looking at the palace wall till I heard the great city bell toll the curfew, and still I gazed, until the moon sank in the west and the darkness hid the wall from view. She lived and breathed beyond it somewhere. What were her surroundings? and to what had she already fallen a victim? were the questions that seized and maddened me.

Suddenly, I was aware of the approach of someone between me and the gate, others followed and a conversation was carried on in a low tone. Someone cautiously turned the light against the wall and gate. I crept close upon them wondering at the absence of the guard, then I recognized the guard

with the lantern, and a dozen other uniformed men. Presently the light fell upon the face of a Japanese official. The plot reported to Tong-siki flashed through my mind, and I turned to creep away with the intention of informing him. I had nearly regained the friendly shelter of a house, when the lantern was turned full upon me; and in a moment I was seized by a dozen men in Japanese uniform. At a word from one who seemed to be in authority, they released their rough hold, and I was placed in their midst.

What was I doing skulking around the palace gates? Did I not know that such actions were treason, and treason meant death? They had been looking for just such fellows as I, and, now that they had found me, they ought to make an example of me.

"Kill him!" said the peevish voice of a countryman of mine, and I thought I recognized in the voice an old man whom I had once heard speak at the home of one of the highest officials in the land; in it I recognized none other than the ex-regent of Korea.

The ludicrousness of the king-regent standing as watchman outside of the city gate caused me to laugh outright. In an instant, a hand was slipped over my mouth and my hands were bound behind me. A consultation was carried on beyond my hearing. Presently there was a pull at my sleeve, and I

was hurried on and told to make no noise. When we entered the lighted part of the city, I noticed that my captor was a Korean policeman, and his sword rattled unpleasantly at his heels. He refused to answer any questions and ordered me on. There was scarcely anyone on the street at that hour, and I was marched through the city to the Japanese concession, and lodged in a Japanese prison.

A spirit of recklessness seized me, and when they cut the thongs that bound my hands and thrust me inside a room, I laughed until my mirthless voice startled me. A kindly disposed Japanese keeper tossed me a pipe and a pouch of tobacco. I broke the pipe into a dozen pieces and hurled them, with the tobacco, out of the door after him. He grunted something and fastened the door upon me. I was angry as I had never been before, and wandered around the small room, feeling of every projection that my hand touched. I felt of the wood bars fastened across a tiny window and tugged at them, then, choosing out one, I lifted in a delirium of rage until the bar broke with a loud explosive noise. The lock on the door rattled and my keeper came in with a light, and attempted to belabor me with a club. I seized his arm, and we rolled together on the floor. I fought with a thrill of savagery until the man under me lay still. The door stood wide open, but I scorned to run; I wanted to fight. The struggle had occupied only a moment; but the noise had awak-

ened other keepers who soon appeared at the door and dragged their fallen countryman to his feet—he rubbed his eyes in a bewildered way as consciousness returned to him. They looked hard at me and at my persecutor, and I felt the rage of all my wrong tingling in my fingertips, and backing into a corner waited for them. They talked excitedly for a few minutes and finally led their companion out and closed the door after them.

Again I laughed loud and bitterly, till my voice startled me. Twice had these aliens wrecked my hopes, and the most bitter of all feelings, racial hatred, filled my soul. I was positive that the letter in Tong-siki's hands had told the truth; and that tomorrow night there would be bloodshed in the palace; and that these aliens would attempt to destroy our Queen. The thought quieted me, and my unreasoning rage subsided. Again I felt about the room for a chance to escape, but this time with caution. All night I paced about the prison cell, and when the morning light crept through the little window I sat down on the floor, and waited for the keeper to bring me my morning rice. My senses were alert to meet the examination that awaited me. Before the morning was half over the chain again rattled at my cell door, and I was called out and conducted, with hands free, for examination before a Japanese official. I was asked why I had been prowling around the palace gate at night. I told

them that I had been simply passing by, when I was suddenly seized by the palace guard and hurried off to prison, never having dreamed of offense, much less a wrong against his Majesty and the laws of this land, or the laws of the great and generous Japanese people. They smiled at the last remark, and asked if I had seen anyone among the guards before, or if I recognized any of their number? I told them that I was a poor man, who carried water in Pyeng-Yang for a living, and had come to Seoul in search of a friend, and that I had never had the privilege of becoming acquainted with the palace guards. Presently the keeper with whom I had had the struggle the night before, was brought in, and, when he appeared with his head bound up, a smile flitted from face to face. He was asked a few questions in Japanese, which I did not understand. The questioner then turned to me and asked if I had broken the prison window the night before, and I admitted that I had.

"Why did you do it?" they asked.

"To get out," I replied.

"Did you not know that it was a grave offense and deserved punishment?"

"I supposed," I replied, "that your excellency would be grateful, if I should demonstrate the worthlessness of the prison."

"Do you see the man with the cloth about his head?"

"Yes."

"Did you attack and wound him last night in prison?"

"No, I did not attack him, but I wounded him."

"Tell your story," he commanded.

I told it, as it was, and added, "Your people beat us on the street and in the shop, wherever we come in contact. Then, when we are arrested, even if it is for no act of violence, your officers of the law beat and wound us. Is it not natural for us to turn on the ones who wound us? Will not the wild deer and rabbit when seized, turn upon their tormentors? If the Creator placed the law in the heart of the brute, why do you deny a human being the same right? Why do you despise the Koreans and ride over our country with shoes of iron? Is it not because we are not in the habit of resisting our wrongs? When we crouch under your blows, you despise us, and the blows are multiplied. I have not learned that you have any law that allows a prison keeper to deliberately unlock a prison door and beat an uncondemned man, and if I have showed, in resisting that unlawful attack, the spirit of manhood which you prize. why should you condemn me or my countrymen under like circumstances, and make us what you deplore and despise?"

"Your story regarding your presence at the palace gate is accepted," they finally announced, "but it is thought wise to detain you a day or two, to test

your good behavior. Do not attempt to escape," they commanded, and I was led away, not to the prison, but what seemed to be a private house. I was given a room with a mat on the floor and to my surprise the door was not locked; but when it opened for a moment to let someone in, I saw a soldier pacing on the outside.

When night came, seized with utter weariness, I lay down to sleep. Late in the evening I was awakened by a Japanese soldier coming in with an armful of blankets. He spread them out on the floor, and removing his clothes lay down on the improvised bed. Soon his heavy breathing announced that he was sound asleep. I crawled to where his suit lay, and removing mine, gradually wormed myself into his. I had nearly completed the task when he awoke, and I barely had time to lie down and feign sleep by heavy breathing, when he sat up. Appearing at last contented with matters, he again lay down and was soon lost in sleep. I crawled to the door and tried to slide it back; it stuck somewhere and would not move. I ran my hand up the casing and found it fastened with a padlock on the inside. I searched through his pockets, but could find no key, and concluded it must be somewhere about the sleeping soldier. I took his suit off and put mine on, then I felt about his blankets. He woke with a start, muttering something in Japanese, and reaching out struck a light. The room was small, and I was only an

arm's length away. My eyes were closed and my face turned toward him, and peering through my lashes, I watched him examine the lock and raise his pillow and rearrange the key underneath. He then reached over with his foot and gave me a rough kick. I awoke with pretended difficulty, and sitting up stupidly asked what he wanted. Grunting his satisfaction he again lay down. When his loud breathing gave notice of sleep, I rolled close to his blankets and cautiously laid my hand on the top of the pillow; five minutes later I crowded my fingers under a few inches; in another five minutes my whole hand had passed under the pillow and my fingers touched the depression made by the soldier's head. I slowly doubled up my fist to raise an uncomfortable place in his pillow, hoping that in his sleep, he would unconsciously roll his head from me. Suddenly, his breathing became quiet, and I knew that he was on the point of awakening, and my heart stood still. My extended arm had already become stiff and my fingers numb, and I doubted my ability to hold my hand quiet, or of even being able to feel the key should I touch it. Presently, his heavy breathing returned and my hand moved nearer his head; he yielded to the pressure, and I extended my fingers till they touched the tiny ring. Five minutes later, I had removed my hand from the pillow and rubbed my fingers until the circulation returned, then I un-

locked the door and placed the key beneath his pillow. I had barely completed the task when he awoke, and sitting up, felt for the key, and reaching out gave me another jab with his foot. Half an hour later, I again worked myself into his suit of clothes, and removing the lock, found the outer door. When I had entered, I had taken notice of the curiously constructed latch, and so was soon out in the open, under the bright, twinkling heavens.

My feet tingled to run, but I walked leisurely down a side street, then quickened my pace. As I crossed the main street a Japanese policeman spoke to me, but I did not answer him, and, to my dismay, he seemed to regard me with suspicion. He approached and examined me closely: "Who are you?" he asked.

"For the palace gate," I whispered, with a feeling of desperation. "Humph!" he grunted, and moved away. When I reached the Korean part of the city, I breathed freely, and hastened down streets and alleyways that were free from meddlesome policemen.

CHAPTER XIX

Attack on the Palace

I reached the door of Tong-siki's home and then paused. The attack on the palace would occur any moment, to tell him would only endanger his life, neither could he be of any assistance at this late hour, I thought—then, too, I had a purpose of my own, and Tong-siki might thwart it; but no, I must tell him, I again reflected, and rapped at his door. There was no answer, then I called in a low voice, but there was no reply. Remembering his uneasiness over the report, I knew that he would do everything in his power to investigate, and was gone for that purpose, and perhaps, at that moment, was in the palace with the alarm. Feeling a sense of relief, I started for the palace gate, a half hour's walk away. I approached the gate with great caution—when suddenly a hand was laid on my shoulder and a lantern swung in my face. My topknot had been lost at the hospital, and the false arrangement that I had used with my headband, had been pulled off in the struggle with the prison keeper. I was led to where others of my countrymen, dressed in the same uniform, waited. A hand was passed over my head and I was pronounced all right. We stood a long

time in deep silence, until at last, we heard the measured tread of a body of men. As they marched by us, we fell in at the rear. The Kang-wha gate was closed, and we waited till it creaked on its hinges and swung open on the inside, then we all crowded in and stood for some minutes under the arched wall.

A consultation, like a rehearsal, was taking place among the leaders, and I pushed among them in the hope of gaining information. What was said was spoken in so low an undertone that I caught but little, but from it all I gathered that the purpose was even as the letter had stated—they were after the life of the Queen, with the plan of getting possession of the government. I tried in the darkness to make out who the conspirators were, but could only ascertain that in the main they were Japanese, assisted by Korean soldiers; who, since the Chinese war, had been trained by Japanese officers. A chair was waiting nearly in the center of the company, and observing that it was the one I had seen entering the palace grounds at the head of these raiders, I crept up to it, and directly, a light in the hands of a soldier shot for an instant across the face of the occupant, and I started to see no less a personage than his highness the Emperor's father. The central figure —attracting general attention—and from whom orders were rapidly being given, was the high Japanese official whom I had seen before.

At sight of him I was amazed beyond expression;

then my amazement grew into hot anger; and, at one moment I had an insane idea that I would attack the man as he stood there; then a moment's reflection came to my rescue.

Tong-siki must be in the palace, I reflected, and started from the crowd so suddenly that several turned to follow with their attention, seeing which, I slackened my pace and carelessly wandered to the outskirts of the company, and beyond the line of soldiers. When free I hurried forward to give the alarm at the palace.

I had gone only a few yards when half a dozen Korean soldiers, some in Japanese uniform, seized me, and I whispered, "Hush! Make no noise."

"What are you doing?" they asked.

"Hush!" I repeated, "they are coming." I took advantage of their momentary hesitation and returned to the body of men, realizing that the organization had been so complete that I could only hope to follow and give the alarm before any violence could be performed against their Majesties. As I turned to the center of the group, I again heard, "The Queen! the Queen! the life of the Queen!"

As the party moved up among the palace buildings, a streak of gray shot across the eastern sky, causing our company to hasten. If there had been nothing previous to mark the soldiers as foreign troops, the alacrity with which they responded to the low commands would have proven their identity.

We were led in and out among great rows of palace buildings toward the one occupied by the Emperor. I was astonished at the ease with which entrance was made, and the total lack of opposition. We were called to a halt and the company was formed in the order of an attacking force, when, suddenly, a scream of terror gave the alarm. Immediately hundreds of lights flickered among the buildings, calls resounded with sharp commands for the soldiers on guard, and in an incredible short time we were faced by a dusky line of the faithful palace guards. On the moment of alarm, the Japanese soldiers sprang ahead with astonishing precision, leaving the Korean company straggling in the rear. Shots rang out in our front, but no one fell. The Japanese soldiers replied with their deadly *murata* and cries and groans followed. As the Japanese charged up the narrow alleyways, I felt a sickening sense of shame to see our palace guard flee before that small body of men.

I stumbled on a fallen palace guard and he feebly called for help. I raised him up, and, as I did so, his jacket swung back, revealing his side covered with blood. I looked for the wound and then dropped him with a feeling of repulsion. He had been hit in the back. Better die, I thought, then in pity stopped to help, but found that he had already rendered up his life. I worked my way around the line that had been drawn about the palace. A group

of So-shi [1] were rushing in and out among the palace buildings calling the name of the Queen. In front of me stood a row of indifferent troops facing the building, the faithful tools of anyone who wore shoulder straps and could call out a command. Except for the shouting of the So-shi, quietness had settled over the palace grounds. Presently screams were heard in the women's apartments. At the sound, I broke through the line of guards and ran for the entrance to the building where I believed was his Majesty. I heard shouting in the rear, and men in hot pursuit. The last year's hardship and exposure had given me endurance, and my pursuers fell behind. At the entrance to the Emperor's apartments I saw a great commotion; Koreans and Japanese dressed as I was were engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle with a gigantic Korean, who, towering above them, swung a club with terrible effect. A light from a torch struck his face and my heart leaped. It was Tong-siki. At the door my pursuers paused, as I was indistinguishable from the jostling mass with swinging arms and legs. I called to Tong-siki and plunged into the center of the fighting mass to get to his side. He saw me, and I noticed a glance of recognition, and that he was bleeding from a wound in the head. It had been too narrow an enclosure and too many crowded into the narrow space to allow the use of the bayoneted

[1] Japanese professional cutthroats

gun. Thus far, Tong-siki, with the ironing club in his hand and his back to the wall, had not been at a great disadvantage; but immediately the thin wall partition fell away on our right and gave room for action. The Japanese in front of me lunged at Tong-siki, but was met by a blow on the head. At that moment, a bayoneted gun was raised over the heads of the struggling mob and aimed at Tong-siki's exposed side. I hurled it aside and slashed with my sword, with a wild, vain hope that I might aid Tong-siki and the Emperor, though I had never held a sword before. Like a flash of light when one sees but has not feeling or thought, I beheld a score of arms raised above me and I fell.

Then I thought I was dreaming in Tong-siki's home and the great bell of the city was ringing its vesper call. The sense of a great duty crept through my brain and I struggled to arouse myself, but it seemed as if I were held down with some ponderous burden; then I awoke, but found the room empty and the body of a huge Korean lying across me. I gained strength and tried to push it from me and my hand was slippery from the touch. I lifted myself on my hands and crawled from beneath the weight and my head was dizzy. I looked at the face of the body at my side with a bewildered sense of familiarity, then my vision cleared and my heart seemed to stand still—it was the set face of Tong-siki. I picked up his hand and it lay right where

I put it. I lifted the hair that had fallen over his white forehead, and at the touch, I forgot the Emperor and Korea's wrongs. The clatter of feet in the adjoining apartment seemed to be something with which I never had anything to do. Then I laid my cheek against Tong-siki's and washed away the red blotches with my tears. I took his head in my lap, and an ugly cut in the back of the head gaped up at me, and I tore up a coat near at hand and bound up the wound; when it was done, the foolishness of the act appeared to me.

The partition that had fallen during the struggle revealed a gorgeous apartment and I knew it was the room occupied by the Emperor, but its gorgeous trappings had no interest for me. Several members of the So-shi came out of an adjoining room and paused in front of me, exchanged remarks in their own tongue, and one vented his spleen by a kick in my side, then passed on. For this I cared nothing, A great thirst overcame me, and seeing a bowl of water on the table in an adjoining room, I laid the head of my friend tenderly on the floor, crossed the floor and brought the bowl back and raised it to my lips. Then a great sob rose in my heart, and I poured the water over the face of the man before me and wiped it away.

A stamping of feet drew my attention to the opposite apartment. The So-shi, a dozen in number, approached, carrying a burden among them. As

they swung into the middle of the room, the morning light glanced upon the beautiful silk garments of a woman. They laid her on the floor exposing to my view her face and—a deep cut in the throat.

At the sight, all the bitter sorrow and pain in my soul turned to hate. Tong-siki's club lay near at hand and I crept over to where it lay. I noticed that it was red the whole length and when my hand closed over it a feeling of grim pleasure, like a hot breath of wind swept over me, and as I crawled back to where his body lay, all the demons of my fierce ancestry awoke with glee. "Kill!" they whispered, "kill!" and I leaned over the body of my friend and waited coolly calculating the number I might be able to surprise and kill before rendering up my own life. A mat was being placed over the face of the dead woman. I made ready for the onslaught and was half conscious of crowding my toes painfully in the floor, when something happened that made me pause in my insane purpose. A young woman was being dragged into the room. Her back was toward me and I was unable to see her face, but something in her graceful, lithe form, fixed my attention with a sense of familiarity, as often will the odor of the rose startle long since dead memories, and the hate in my heart lifted like a sickly vapor. Suddenly, the cover was pulled from the face of the dead and the palace girl rudely pushed forward.

"The Queen! the Queen! O! O! O!" the girl cried, and covered her face with her hands. She was released, and fled with the swiftness of a fawn, and there flashed across my mind a familiar scene at the old hermitage. Presently, a second palace woman was dragged into the room, and when the face of the dead was uncovered, she flung herself on the floor and sobbed the name of her Majesty. Thus the murderers proved the identity of their victim.

The deep shadows of the room where I crouched had hid all my movements, and so far, secure from molestation, I had watched the scene and was torn by a thousand conflicting emotions; hate, revenge, and sorrow held sway, until, at last, the sweet face of the Pyeng-Yang battlefield seemed to look down in mine, and I turned to Tong-siki's marble face and touched it with a feeling of tenderness and whispered his name—and the name of Ewa.

The body of the Queen was hastily wrapped in a rough mat and carried out, the red ooze dripping through as they bore her by me out of the door.

Hardly had they departed before the smooth, wrinkled face of a eunuch presented itself, cautiously, at the door in the opposite end of the room. Then it gazed around with bulging, scared eyes, and withdrew. Presently a huge body presented itself. The light was not strong enough to make our position known, and he wandered about looking into the corners, cautiously, as if on the point of taking

to his heels. As he was about to pass by, I arose in front of him with Tong-siki's club in my hand. With a cry of terror he threw up both hands, and his fat legs shook under him. "I want your help," I said, raising my club; he fell on his knees with his head to the floor and begged for his life. I had some difficulty in persuading him that I meant no harm, but wanted him to help me carry the body of a man out of the house and to some place where I could look after it, to prevent it from falling into the hands of persons who might be his enemies. I feared that they would mutilate it and represent him as having been the traitor and cause of the Queen's death. When the eunuch understood my purpose he gained courage and readily consented to secure coolies to carry off the dead.

"Indeed!" said he, "the palace is much polluted and we must cleanse it of all such carrion."

"Carrion!" said I, "he gave his life for the Queen."

"Life for her?" he replied, blinking his pig-eyes at me, "what right has anyone from the common herd to presume to offer what naturally she would spurn?"

The brutal words and the conviction of his complicity in the murder enraged me, and I again swung the bloody club. His face blanched and he crouched at my feet. "I will order the coolies," he said, with lips blue with fear, and made as if to leave.

"Here!" I commanded, seizing the body by the shoulders, "take hold and lift."

"No! no! no!" he wailed, "I can't touch the dead." Again I swung the club and he knelt near the body and I lifted it by the shoulders and forced him to lock his fat arms around it. Then I lifted, too.

"Where?" he gasped, the perspiration running down his face.

"Your apartments," I commanded. He staggered and I made a motion to draw the club. A prolonged "Y-a-a" was the reply, and we started toward a door that I had not noticed before. The burden was great and required all our effort. We passed out into a narrow alley that led finally to a summer court, where well-tended autumn flowers bloomed everywhere. Panting for breath, we laid our burden down beside the walk beneath a shrub. The eunuch's garments were stained and he staggered across the yard and pulled them from him with the haste of mortal fear. I gave him no further attention, but sat by the side of my friend in helpless misery. I was aware of persons in the yard, of whom I took no notice, but was suddenly conscious of someone standing at my back, looking over my shoulder at the face on the ground. I felt irritated at the presence of anyone actuated by curiosity and looked up with impatience, and then sprang to my feet.

"Ewa!" I cried, and stepped toward her. She did not look at me, probably not hearing. She pointed to the face on the ground. I looked and a great wave of delight swept over me. There was a twitching of the muscles of Tong-siki's face. "Water," I called; the girl sped away and in a moment was back with a gourd of cold water. I reached for it, but she knelt at his side and began bathing his forehead with her own hands.

She was gorgeous in silks and bright colors, and her large sleeves slipped back to the elbow, revealing the sign of the cross on her wrist. Her head bent near mine and her hair touched my shoulder. I was still in my Japanese uniform, and blood covered my face. She had not recognized me, doubtless believing that I had really died on the battlefield of Pyeng-Yang. I watched her fingers as they deftly bathed Tong-siki's face, and tightened the bandage around his head. She washed his blood-stained hands. Tong-siki opened his eyes and looked vacantly up, tried to move his lips and closed his eyes again. I laughed, and cried, and took the dear old hand of my faithful comrade and caressed it and midst laughter and tears talked to him in the foolish style of our boyhood days.

"Wake up, Tong-siki," said I, "Mayo is under the sweet willow with his lute, come where we can see the river in the sunlight; come Tong-siki, the boats are dancing on the water and calling you, the

path all the way down to the river bank is crowded with flowers."

He opened his eyes and smiled with a look of intelligence and I laughed and pressed his cheek with my fingers. Then I noticed that the girl had silently withdrawn and was intently gazing at me, her lips white, and the muscles of her beautiful face like statuary. I deliberately reached for the gourd of water and washed the blood stains from my face and hands, and presented my wrist with the sign of the cross. I laid it out against Tong-siki's forehead as if by accident. A company of women had gathered and were standing somewhat aloof, but watched our efforts at resuscitation with great interest.

"Ewa," I whispered, "you thought I was dead, but I have been searching for you all these months." While speaking I looked at Tong-siki, then glanced at her face; her breath was coming short and rapid, and the large, dark eyes were searching me from head to foot. "You wanted me to search for you?" I pleaded, with an undefinable fear creeping down in my heart.

"Water!" Tong-siki whispered, and I called to one of the women standing at a distance. She brought it and placed it in my hands. Violence had, for a moment, eliminated all barriers of rank. I placed the water to Tong-siki's lips, then he wearily closed his eyes.

When I looked at Ewa she was in the same attitude.

"No word for me, Ewa?" I asked.

"Regicide!" she said, glancing at Tong-siki.

"No! no! he fell in defense of the Emperor," I said.

Her gaze turned to my Japanese uniform.

"I? I was at his side, this is a disguise," I said, interpreting her questioning look.

"Escape!" I said, then I paused; for the first time her position at the royal court loomed up before my vision. Would she, indeed, follow me? She had the wealth of the country at her feet, and to what distance would her beauty, grace and brilliancy not carry her? My lips grew dumb and I felt faint and helpless.

At that moment, there was a stir at the yard gate, and the company of bystanders fled for seclusion. The slave girl alone remained, though she withdrew a few yards. The eunuch appeared with a company of coolies bearing a rough stretcher.

"Remove this carrion from the palace grounds," said he, authoritatively, as he came puffing to my side, then paused when he saw that Tong-siki was alive. It was evident that he held profound reverence for my Japanese uniform, which confirmed my suspicions that he had been an accomplice to the crime.

"Send those coolies out," I ordered, "and bring in

a better litter for a sick man." He hesitated, but in five minutes was back with a litter and blankets.

When Tong-siki had been laid on the litter I told the eunuch that it was too late in the day for me to appear on the street in that uniform, that he must furnish me with something Korean, as it would not be good for either him or me if I were to be found in it, providing the present *coup d' état* should not prove successful. His face grew purple with wrath and he stormed furiously, that I should class him with the murderers of the Queen. I looked him straight in the face and laughed.

"Good acting," said I, "keep it up. I see the Japanese and the king-regent know how to choose good accomplices." He disappeared, puffing and muttering, and soon returned with a suit of clothes and motioned me to one of his rooms.

I felt assured, when I finally looked myself over, that it would puzzle any Japanese policeman to discover in me the man who had escaped from their hands the previous night.

"Hide the uniform," I directed, "till I send or call for it."

As I walked down the yard to join the coolies who were impatiently waiting with the litter raised on their shoulders, I passed a large shrub in the middle of the compound. A white garment glinted through the branches and I paused in front of it, pretending to adjust my hat.

"Watch," a low musical voice said, "at the home of the rich Yi."

"Where?" I asked, but she had gone.

With a hopeful heart I followed the litter through its many windings among the palace buildings; presently we were brought to a halt by a large crowd of palace people who were standing in our path. I ordered the coolies to wait and worked my way into the midst of the crowd of scared, white faces. The smell of burning flesh arose from the ground and looking over someone's shoulder I saw a charred heap. "What is it?" I asked.

"Queen!" was the awed reply.

CHAPTER XX

Storms in the Capital

I hastened back to the litter and urged the coolies on. We passed out of a small gate where our guide left us, and I led the way across the city to a foreign hospital, wher our burden was kindly received.

We laid Tong-siki gently on the warm floor of the hospital. He had said nothing since asking for water. The surgeon looked him over with a non-committal face, and told me to return the next day. Being assured that he would have good care, and that in any case I would not be allowed to remain with him, I reluctantly took my leave after a long look at the face of my friend. He did not reply to my inquiries and words of farewell; then I knew that he was, indeed, a sick man. Many days thereafter I hung around the hospital with an occasional privilege of looking in, but not to speak to him. A piece of broken skull had been lifted from the brain, I was told, and that he might get well.

Frequently I searched for the Yi home, without success. Tong-siki alone knew where it was and many times I asked myself when he would be able to tell me.

I took the news of Tong-siki's illness to his old associate, Mr. Cho, who expressed his regrets much as he would if he had seen a neighbor bruise his finger. I was angered at the indifferent interest of the many who had fawned at his feet, hoping for political preferment in case he should succeed. Many of them had acknowledged and praised Tong-siki's moral vigor, but the hand of restraint irritated them, and they felt a sense of relief in his absence. Their politeness, however, dictated expressions of regard. Others had a desire to aid in a real reform, but needed just his rugged leadership, and they were really sorry for losing him. But in none was the grief so deep that they were led to call in person at the hospital. There were those, however, who sent food delicacies and their cards, none of which were allowed to reach him.

A fever of some sort had attacked the patient, and I had to be content to sit, day after day, on the hospital doorsteps and listen to the monotonous answers to all my inquiries, "Just the same." Finally, one bright November day, I was told that I might visit him. He was lying in a darkened corner on a mat. I was wholly unprepared for the change. He was but a skeleton, the skin seemed drawn tight over his skull, making his head appear abnormally large. His eyes were sunken and his mouth seemed to stretch across his face, giving it a ghastly smile.

"Tong-siki!" I half sobbed; his eyes turned to me

with an intelligent look. He spoke weakly but with cheerful accents. "Getting better," said he, "will soon be with you, bride-hunting again."

Tong-siki's illness had doubtlessly saved his life. The party that came into power, as the result of the death of her Majesty, searched relentlessly for persons on whom they could fix the name of the crime, to cover up the real criminals. Innocent people were seized, strangled, or beheaded in great numbers; and the country grew weary at the sickening scene, which deceived no one any more than did the burning of the Queen's body. At the beginning Tong-siki was searched for as one of the marked men. His death would satisfy many plotters of violence.

When I found where Mr. Yi lived I hastened to the place, and was filled with dismay on learning that he had fled for fear of being apprehended. The matter surprised me the more that he was in league with the eunuch, who, I knew, was an accomplice with the murderers of the Queen. Something, I argued, must have caused the eunuch's enmity. Perhaps he saw an independent fortune in the sole possession of the girl, and therefore wished to enrich himself by disposing of Mr. Yi. But the more I thought of the matter the less satisfactory did that explanation seem. Mr. Yi being wealthy it would be for the former's interest to continue old relations, unless, indeed, he had already secured Mr. Yi's wealth.

I assumed the role of a servant and visited the household that occupied Mr. Yi's old quarters, but they could give me no information. By none of the old devices, that helped me under disguise, could I join a company of officials' servants on their visit to the palace grounds. The new forces in possession guarded their interests with jealous care. I was compelled to wait till Tong-siki should again be able to move among his former associates.

In the meantime an effort was made by the Royalists to roust the pretenders, but the plan of the attack on the palace was betrayed and the Royalists were seized; then there was a repetition of slaughter in the prisons of Seoul.

In January Tong-siki was back in his old place in the house of his former friend, Mr. Cho. Associates who had neglected him in his sickness, gathered around him now, with many expressions of pleasure over his "resurrection." The great work that he had inaugurated had fallen to pieces. He found some of his associates among the Japanese party, and some among the Royalists, while others who were nearer him had fallen under the knife. A man of less courage would have been appalled at the task. Heretofore, all his movements had been carried on under the greatest secrecy; now, however, there were numbers in the ascendancy who found it to their interest to throw off all allegiance to him, denouncing him openly as a foolish and dan-

gerous dreamer. Again, with his marvelous personality and his profound faith in his countrymen, he bent his energies to reorganize his plans. Self-sacrifice was his watchword, which seemed to his associates madness, until they came under his wonderful personality. Then, frequently, the idea of renunciation for the love of justice and the glory of their country, became a passion, held in restraint only by his farsighted reasoning.

Finally it was hinted by his enemies that Tong-siki had struck down the minister of the royal household at the time of the royal *coup d'état,* and that a certain eunuch had, in defence of his Majesty felled and seriously wounded Tong-siki, and that he had been in hiding until recently. The report was industriously circulated among the common people and the charges were pushed so hotly that many friends again fell from him, and his life was threatened.

About this time, the royal decree went forth, ordering all loyal subjects to cut off their top-knots. The people believed that his Majesty had been coerced in this measure by the hated Japanese, in common with everything else that had recently emanated from the palace.

"Would," the people asked, "our father, the Emperor, wantonly humiliate us to the level of Buddhist priests?"

They rose in revolt, until the iron hand of mili-

tary power under the Japanese command forced them to submit. Tong-siki and I had long since under the necessity of the surgeon's knife, lost that heritage of our ancestry.

"Let the 'reforms' continue," said Tong-siki. "The slaughter of members of the royal family and the degradation of our millions will, doubtlessly, win the love and devotion of Korea to Japan. Let her continue," he said with a smile, "till she has every Korean her bitter foe. True enough, one Korean means but little under present conditions; but when twelve millions of people become imbued with one idea, it will take more diplomacy than lies in the statesmanship of that country to make Korea Japanese territory. She may land armies; but that will be only for a day, while our millions are here forever. We shall live and fight on through the centuries. We may not be regarded as a great people to-day, but we have seen many nations who were called great, swept from the face of the earth. Three thousand years rest on our head like a crown of glory. Others may fight harder and with more brilliancy, but none have ever endured as we have. In the past centuries, after our enemies have exhausted themselves in battering down our walls and trampling upon our homes, we have risen from the ruins and driven them from our shores. While in the hospital I heard, among many other things, a bit of philosophy—'He who appeals to the sword, will die

WHERE KOREA AND JAPAN MEET

by the sword.' Korea has never lifted her sword during all her history, except in self-defense, and then only when her would-be destroyers were actually on her soil. When a people boasts of armies destroyed and alien peoples conquered, it should remember the irony of Fate, who takes toll of every drop of blood wantonly shed, not from the conquered, but from the veins of the conquerors. Statesmen have profitable lessons to learn from the philosophy of justice. Let Japan use force to our humiliation and force, like a grizzly giant, will arise and beat her to powder at our feet. Do you know why I struggled with the problem of reform with so much confidence? I may perish, but the right will win; such is the law of the sages, and such is the law of the Christians. While in the hospital I had an abundance of time to reflect upon the new religion of the West. New, did I say? It is as old as the world; it is God working through man. There is much in it of which I am still a humble student. Justice and sacrifice, Sung-yo, are the words most on the lips of its devotees, and justice, the law of the universe, will be Korea's portion."

Soon great changes took place in the capital. The Emperor had fled to the Russian Legation and set up his court there. The crime of the murderers of the Queen, who were now stripped of the glamour of power, stood out in hideous proportions. At this juncture Tong-siki was able to make his influence felt.

Other leaders started the Independence party movement, from which Tong-siki held aloof. He had a terror of the rule of mobs. When asked his opinion, he replied that it was an organism with a vast amount of enthusiasm, but little reason; as a schoolmaster, it might have its place, but savored much of anarchy.

When it was understood that the Japanese power over the Emperor had been removed, there was general rejoicing throughout the country and among many of the officials. Tong-siki remarked to those self-congratulatory statesmen, that the ridding of the country of the hateful enemy did not mean reform, or in any measure a betterment of the condition of the people, and his kindly remarks regarding the Japanese surprised his friends.

When Tong-siki was again able to enter the palace he made vigorous search for the rich Yi and the slave girl. He learned that the girl had escaped and that Mr. Yi had fled from the city and was in hiding, the girl probably with him. It was not until long afterward that I learned that Tong-siki had encountered the eunuch and forced from him these facts. It had cost him, however, a huge sum of money, and the effort had brought him so close to powerful members of the cabinet who hated him, that it had nearly cost him his life.

All this he kept from me and advised me not to delay my efforts to find Mr. Yi's hiding place. It

later developed that the girl having fled from her service in the palace to her old master, the eunuch understood it as a scheme to circumvent him by exposing his part in the overthrow of the old regime and murder of the Queen. Now that the Japanese influence was gone, his life would be in imminent danger should any of these facts come to light. Accordingly, he trumped up a charge against Mr. Yi, and the news of the intended arrest sent that gentleman in a panic to a country hiding-place.

CHAPTER XXI

The Search Continued

Returning to the city of Pyeng-Yang, I sold much of my remaining property, and again took up my long search through the interior. I traced the party, at last, to a coast steamer, and followed the same route; stopped off at every landing and made diligent search. Of my journeyings, and endless search and multitude of disappointments, I have not time here to speak.

It seemed to me that the earth had literally opened and swallowed the Yi family. I visited the old Hermitage in disguise, and met the old servant of my previous acquaintance. She was ignorant of their whereabouts, and stated, as her belief, that Mr. Yi had been reduced to poverty. She herself had fled from Pyeng-Yang at the time of the Chinese war, and found refuge at the cave, waiting faithfully for the renewal of her youth. I made a thorough search of the Yi clan, and found out all about his relations to it, and visited hundreds of that name; but he had taken the precaution not to affiliate with any, that he might cover up all his tracks. Agents had sold off his property, and when I searched the country where it was stated the author of the transaction lived, I was told that no such person existed.

Two years had thus passed when the events of this history crowded rapidly upon me. It was in the southern part of the province of Chue-la. Foot-sore and weary, I climbed a mountain path leading to a town where I hoped for a night's rest. One of those late seasons of heavy rain had set in for the last five days, and when I reached the top of the mountain pass, I was told that it would be impossible for me to proceed any farther than the valley below, for at that point, the mountain stream had swollen to an impassable flood. To return to the village that I had left would be a long journey; the town ahead, I was informed, was only an hour's walk, and I resolved to continue to the stream and take my chances in getting across. At the top of the mountain, a few yards from the path, the stream bounded over rocks and shot out, as if propelled by some unseen force hidden in the dark pools of the deep basins of the mountainside. As I journeyed the stream grew larger, roaring and bellowing as it tore downward; near the bottom the volume of water had vastly increased; it pounded and thundered till the foundation of the mountain trembled. At the bottom, the torrent spread out in a narrow plain and flowed with frightful rapidity, as if pursued by our mountain demons. Farther on, it turned abruptly across my path, beyond which, on the other side, was the village that I had been seeking for a night's shelter. As I approached the usual ford, where in dry

weather a half dozen stones serve as a crossing, I found a broad stream filled with bowlders, around which the torrent staggered and whined complainingly, then hastened down the valley. Ahead of me were other travelers, who had been brought to a standstill with the smoke of their homes within sight. On the bank, a large Korean stalked back and forth impatiently, while the bearers of his palanquin lay on the ground, indifferent alike to their employer's impatience, and to the stream which flowed so boisterously at their feet.

As I neared the group, the chair-bearers rose from the ground and seemed to be remonstrating with their master as he stood looking out across the flood. In a moment, he had thrown off his clothes, and hastily tying them in a bundle, fastened it at the back of his head, plunged into the water, and struck out for the opposite shore. I ran to the river bank and watched the progress of the swimmer. He had miscalculated the fierceness of the current, and we ran along the bank to keep pace with him as he was swept down stream. At one moment he seemed on the point of gaining on the current, then at the next, he would be seized by a new force attacking him from behind some bowlder, and hurled back in midstream. At first he seemed a good swimmer, coolly calculating his chances and working without undue haste, as if intent on husbanding his strength, yet he was soon puffing and staggering, as a man over-

taxed. Below, some distance, at a point which marked the beginning of long rapids, the water became more boisterous, churning and boiling furiously. The swimmer saw that he was being swept irresistibly toward the spouting rocks, and lunged forward with all his might to make the shore. We shouted to encourage him—he gained on the flood, then his strength was gone; a few more feeble strokes and he was back in the middle of the boiling stream. Ahead, the spray shot high in the air, and the stream surged and bounded over the submerged bowlders. To strike one of these rocks meant instant death, and I held my breath as he swept on to this maelstrom of seething foam. He was looking ahead, and from where we stood we could see his eyes bulging with terror; someone at my side called to him, I know not what, nor could the swimmer hear in that din of hurrying waters. At the beginning of the rapids, the stream narrowed and seemed to drop away from the flood above and shoot forward with frightful speed. Having noted the change in the stream, I ran ahead, vaguely wondering if some current would not hurl him shoreward. I reached a certain point, opposite which the stream turned away and made a sharp bend against the other shore, some hundred yards below. Already the swimmer was being hurled down the rapids, and, as I glanced upstream, the converging currents seized and plunged him beneath the surface; imme-

diately he reappeared nearly opposite me. I had with unconscious action stripped off my clothes as I ran, and stood with hands raised over my head. As the man came to the surface a dark ring around his waist showed for an instant, and I knew that he was being dragged to his death by a string of copper coin tied there.

I plunged in and with steady stroke gained on the white body that glanced a moment in the light here and there, was gone beneath the flood—then slipped away yonder beyond my grasp. On the right and left, the water churned and jostled against the rocks, and I marveled at our escape. At first I struggled to seize the drowning man, then I pulled steadily in his wake resolving to reserve my strength for the struggle beyond. One moment, in my eagerness, I rashly seized him, and his slippery body glided through my grasp, the act causing a defalcation of our direction, and we barely escaped being dashed on to a pile of ragged rocks. Beyond, at the bend, the stream plunged up against the rocky bank, and seemed shouting and roaring to receive us. I was appalled at the sight and made a lunge for the man ahead and seized the straw rope about the waist; it gave way, and I was glad to see the body bound to the surface when relieved of its weight of metal. In a moment I had the man by the hair and battled against the current that each moment was hurling us toward those perilous rocks. The fierce strug-

gle exhausted my strength, and I became confused and had a dim idea that I was to be thrown into the air, like the spray above us, when we should strike the rocks. Suddenly a rock in midstream appeared in our front, and I seized on to a sharpened projection and clung for an instant with my left hand, and thought not of it when the rock cut deep into the flesh. The body to which I clung swung down the stream, away from the rocks near the shore, then I was torn from my hold and we were hurled shoreward, where the tide boiled and surged with such fury. I caught my breath as the water closed over my head. It seemed an age that I lay helpless under that mad flood, my head seemed bursting, and I prayed to the Christian's God. Then, suddenly, we shot to the surface, and as soon as I could get breath, I discovered that we were in the margin of one of those remarkable eddies in our rivers, where the stream in its mad plunge downward, catches a projection of the bank and is divided, a part turning backward along the shore. A few strokes, and we were floating up stream, with a gentle motion.

I labored heavily shoreward with my burden, and when my feet touched bottom I staggered to where it was shallow, and waistdeep in water sat down, gasping painfully for breath. I took the head of the drowning man in my arms and tried to hold it above the surface; I had not seen the face clearly be-

fore, and as I did so, I flung it from me and rose to my feet, while the body glided into deeper water; it was the face of the rich Yi.

Then I reached after it and dragged it ashore, and by prodigious effort arranged it on the bank with its head down; then I lay down and thought my strength would never return. I got up and with numb hands and arms tried to work the water from the body I had brought ashore, and it became loathsome to my touch. To have left him alone and sought Ewa, who must be near at hand, would have closed all my years of pain and wanderings; even now, like an uninvited guest, the question comes again and again to my mind, would it not have been best?

I was frequently on the point of turning from my labors of resuscitation; then the face of Tong-siki would seem to stand out before me, and I would hear his words, "Sacrifice, it is the law of the sages and of the Christians"; so I labored on. Soon the color crept into the face of the man before me; then his eyelids twitched, and he looked up at me with a far-away expression; and I was glad. Finally a coughing fit seized him, and I sat at a distance watching him pass through the painful struggles of the nearly drowned, when life is again enthroned.

When he had sufficiently recovered, he rose and looked around and wanted to know what had happened? I told him the story of the accident, leaving

out no detail; he heard me through and looked his gratitude, but finally started and felt at his waist for the string of cash, and looked suspiciously at me.

"See," I said, with a feeling of contempt, "I am as naked as you are, have I your money?" He looked down-ashamed.

The sun was touching the horizon when we were able to rise and start toward the village then was I glad with a hope that the years of struggle were at an end. My lips burned with questions as to the slave girl's whereabouts and her welfare, but dared not speak of those things. I had an intuition that if she were still in his possession, he would guard her with fierce jealousy, and no sense of gratitude on his part would protect me from violence. I determined if she were here that no power on earth could separate us again; the resolve grew into a fierce passion, and I was impatient to measure strength and will with the man before me.

On the outskirts of the town, Mr. Yi called to a neighbor and secured clothing. I followed him into the village. He could hardly have chosen a better place to hide from the enraged officials of the capital. The town was hemmed in among the mountains and difficult of access from any direction. The people were exceedingly poor and evidently held little communication with the outside world, and the houses were miserable huts. Mr. Yi's home, while the largest in the town, was nothing more

than a large straw hut divided into several small rooms. I discovered later that he had bought up most of the rice land in the immediate vicinity of the town.

I was glad that he did not recognize me as the man who had carried water to his door, and played the lute at his feet in Pyeng-Yang. Time and exposure had made many changes in my appearance.

As we entered a street of the town, a girl with a cloak drawn over her face, stepped in behind my companion, and he greeted her with a word of kindly recognition. She followed close at his heels, and I concluded that she must be of his household. Something in the short dumpy figure trudging between us, reminded me of someone I had seen before. As our course zigzagged through the narrow streets, a great crowd gathered at our heels, with a multitude of questions regarding Mr. Yi's escape. He admitted that I had helped him out of the river, though I thought it was with an air of reluctance, but I had my reward by being regarded a hero. Where had I come from, and what had I come for? What was my name? How long would I remain among them? were among the multitude of questions hurled at me. I answered them all with frankness. There are little more than a hundred surnames in our country, and I stood in little danger of discovery by giving them my true name.

The dumpy figure in front of me followed faith-

fully behind us, turning around a muddy pool here, and over a pile of rubbish there, always with her diminutive foot in the tracks of Mr. Yi.

When we reached the house I paused at the compound gate with the proper respect for the house. Mr. Yi turned to direct me to an outer reception room, and as he did so, the girl dropped the cloak from her head and faced us. I was spellbound, and stared at her in amazement. She was humpback and ugly, the face that I had seen while peering through the window years ago in the city of Pyeng-Yang; she was my betrothed whom I was still bound to marry by the customs and law of our country. I stared at the apparition till the girl covered her head, and Mr. Yi called me to my senses by asking if that was the custom in my section of the country to stare at young women. His face was near mine, and he breathed heavily as he spoke.

Stammering an apology, I went into a room where neighbors had already gathered, hoping to have a chance to hear more of our escape from the flood. I sat down confused, and answered their many questions absently. They muttered among themselves something about unsociability, and finally drifted from the room.

The owner of the beautiful slave girl, was the father of the deformed creature, through whom my father had intended to refill his money boxes. If Mr. Yi should find out who I am, thought I, he

might have the papers of the contract in the hands of the nearest magistrate in a few hours, then my misery would only begin.

When the last neighbor had worked his feet into his sandals and disappeared I was left quite alone. I walked about the room and peered through the cracks of the door, into the open yard about the house, hoping for a view of her, for whom I had sought so long and eagerly.

At the hour for the evening meal, Mr. Yi came in and sat down, and I wondered if the slave girl would bring the rice; when the door at last opened I looked up with my heart in my mouth, but it was not she, nor did she appear later to carry away the tables. At last when the meal was over, I began to question Mr. Yi as to his history, in the usual polite, indifferent way of our people. He replied evasively to my question regarding his children; he still had two daughters; his sons had all died; as to slaves he had none, they were more trouble than they were worth. Yes, he had been to the capital, and had seen something of life there; on making the remark he drew himself up, and for the next hour maintained a bearing of considerable importance. When I told him that it was surmised that a certain eunuch had taken part in the Japanese raid on the palace, he looked at me sharply and appeared suspicious of my purpose in coming to the town. I told him that the eunuch had lost his political influ-

ence, and Mr. Yi seemed pleased and talked with more freedom. I mentioned the fact that one of the palace women, the most talented and beautiful, was suddenly missing, and that there had been no trace found of her; some thought that she had committed suicide; others thought that she had been destroyed at the time of the Queen's death, while others believed that she had been spirited away and was still living in seclusion, and that, when it should become advantageous for her captors to do so, they would return her to the royal family. I hinted that the country was being searched for her, and I pitied the man who fell into the hands of the law on her account.

He moved uneasily, and covertly watched my face.

"Yes," said he, "I would not want to be in the place of any man who had caused the wrath of a member of the royal family."

"It seems to me," said I, "that the only way for anyone in that position would be to marry off the girl as soon as possible and get rid of her."

His startled look warned me that I was pushing affairs too fast, and I hastily changed the subject of conversation, nor did I return to it again that evening, but rattled on regarding my purpose to visit a friend in the South. While I talked he examined me minutely, and seemed pleased to note that my hands were heavy with toil, and that my skin had been burned to a dark brown by exposure to the

sun. I endeavored to give him the impression of the utmost frankness, and clung in my speech to the provincialism of the North, with which I was familiar from boyhood. He strove clumsily at first to draw me out as to my knowledge of affairs at the capital. I permitted him to lead me on and answered every question from the standpoint of gossip. So and so had said this and that.

When we parted late in the evening, he acknowledged with openheartedness his debt of gratitude to me for saving his life. He was sorry that I had lost my suit of clothes, but out of gratitude he would give me a suit. Indeed, what was a suit of clothes compared to one's life; also, no doubt, I had had money in my bag, but never mind that, just name the amount and he would replace it, and trust to the honesty of the chair-bearers to return it when the water went down; but what was a few strings of cash in a case like this, indeed, he would double the amount, so that I would not need to delay my journey to meet my friend. He knew what a terrible thing it was to be separated from friends; he would have an early breakfast, and I might get off as soon as daylight; his gratitude would do more for me, he would send someone to help me on the way; he had a donkey and would be glad to loan me the animal to ride, if I would accept such service; indeed, he would accompany me himself, and at that point he became warm in his protestations of a feeling of

friendship that would not let him commit such an act of gratitude to a servant. When I protested his gratitude knew no bounds; he would have the donkey saddled and at the door at daylight; and he would accompany me for a distance of at least two days; and, as he thought the matter over, he would like to make the acquaintance of the friend of whom I had spoken so warmly.

When at last he had left me, I lay down for the night with the feeling of disgust of one being outwitted.

All night I revolved schemes for remaining and felt humiliated that I had so blundered in conversation, as to make my host determined to get rid of me. I could only think that his panic must be from fear that I would learn something of the girl, and report her whereabouts to the officials in Seoul. That being the case, I knew that he would either succeed in removing me, or in spiriting the girl away. I mused much over his unreasonable fear of the Seoul officials, and the probable absolute indifference of even the eunuch, regarding him or the girl.

At midnight I carefully crawled to the door and stepped out. When I could get my bearings I made a circuit of the outside of the compound and examined every detail with minute care. Returning, I tried to pass from the room to the inside compound. I had hardly stepped into the yard when a dog set up a furious barking. I softly withdrew and laid

down. Hardly had I done so when I heard my host shuffling about the yard; the dog came to my door and laid down on the step. His master brought a light and seemed to be examining the walks and steps. The shrewdness of the act astonished me; I reached for my sandals and felt of the bottoms, dry ashes crumbled beneath my fingers. Hastily brushing the bottoms, I placed them at the outer door, and then lived a five minutes of agony to know whether he had discovered my tracks on the steps. The lamp approached, and a cuff sent the dog across the yard. I felt easier, for I was sure that the animal had obliterated any marks of my sandals; evidently his suspicions were of the liveliest kind, and I realized for the first time the task before me.

True to his promise of the previous night, food was brought before daylight; and I soon heard the stamping of horses' feet and the harsh bray of a donkey, which proclaimed that my host had meant all he had said. A half hour later Mr. Yi appeared and, seeing that I had not touched the food, hastily inquired the cause. I apologized for the insult offered his house, but the struggle in the river the previous day had made me ill. Dismay was written all over his face; down in my sandals somewhere I laughed uproariously, though my face was filled with pain, for I had practiced the expression for the last three hours, indeed, the lack of a night's rest after the fierce struggle of the afternoon had

left my eyes red and smarting, but I had not been so hungry since I ate rice with the Chinese at the time of the war. I begged him to send the table away, which he did, and I followed it with my eyes, regretfully. The doctor soon appeared, and his drugs nauseated me; I was glad, as it proved that I was sick, and it helped me to get rid of the drug.

All day I tried to interpret every step about the building, but felt sure if my host intended to remove the girl, he would not do so so until night had come. At noon, I was persuaded to eat something, and there was evident hope in Mr. Yi's heart, but at night I was manifestly worse, and my host's solicitude decreased as my illness seemed to increase.

At midnight I heard a shuffling of feet, and murmuring of voices in the softest undertone, I crept to the door of my room which opened into the compound and working a hole through the paper covering, I could see that several persons were preparing to leave, among them were two women. When they had passed into the street, I made ready to follow.

Beyond the house a lantern was lit, and I was able to make out my host. The sight pleased me, as he would not be able to spy on my movements. I followed the party through the streets and out in the open country, and was surprised when an hour passed—then two—and still the party walked on. Finally they led the way into a hamlet nestled up

among the overhanging rocks of the mountain. I closed up the distance between us so as not to lose sight of them. Someone met them at a compound gate and the company talked and chattered without restraint. Noting the house they entered, I crawled so close that I heard my host give directions in a tone of authority, so I knew the building belonged to him. I lingered till I heard him say that he would return on donkey-back, then I fled with all haste that I might outstrip his donkey, the occasion giving speed to my feet.

At the early cock crowing I was again creeping into the room I had left, and soon I was in profound sleep, and when I awoke it was nearly noon of the next day. Food was brought, and I announced that I was better and would be moving. My host poured upon me genuine hospitality, and urged me to stay until wholly recovered. In mid-afternoon, however, he consented to my determination to leave and, true to his promise, accompanied me on his donkey till we reached an inn some forty li from his village. With many expressions of gratitude for his hospitality on my part, and protestations on his part, we separated, he taking his way homeward, and I, for a hearty supper and a mat for a good night's rest. The next day I explained that my health had been poor, and I would spend the day in rest, and in the meantime made close inquiries regarding the topography of the country.

While lying on the floor in the inn, impatient for the day to pass, I looked over head and noticed what appeared to be a gourd from which extended a projection, like a handle. I looked at it indifferently for some time with my mind absorbed with the purpose before me. I made many foolish vows and called the gods to witness that in the duel with the powerful Yi, I would win, or perish in the attempt.

A breath of air stirred among the beams overhead, and the string, dangling from the gourd, swung back and forth, and held my attention. I got up and looked more closely, then tugged at it. Instead of a gourd, as I thought, I held in my hand a lute covered deep with dust. A strange sensation crept over me; I carried it to the door and brushed it free of dust, then my hand shook. I was repeating in my heart, "Mayo! dear old Mayo!" I knew that the fingers that had touched and caressed it so often were idle and would be so forever. Somewhere in a gruesome prison house he was lying, and his music forever hushed and silent.

I called the innkeeper and he told me the story of its possession.

Said he: "More than a year ago, an old man was found ill one morning some fifty li north, and the people, for fear that he would die on their hands, and they would have the trouble of digging a grave for him, had carried him during the night to the next town, and the next village not wanting the task,

in their turn, picked him up, and carried him on; this move was repeated by each village until, at last, he was laid in our streets, with the lute still in his hands. He was very weak, mostly from the lack of food. I gave him a bowl of rice, and tears of gratitude trickled down his face and he kissed my hand. When it was suggested by someone that he give up his lute to pay for the food he was eating, he refused the rice and clung to the instrument. None of us wanted the care of a sick man, much less his death in our homes, and, it being warm weather, he was left out on the roadside. In the night, the people heard the sweet tones of his instrument accompanied with the quavering and halting voice of the minstrel. He was singing a strange new song that he had found among the Christians, 'My father is rich in houses and lands.' The notes yearned and cried about our houses all night like the wail of an infant. When the light of morning was breaking, I went out to him, but he did not look at me. His eyes were fixed in the distance; he had ceased playing, but his fingers were on the strings; 'my father!' he whispered, 'my mother!' then his lips were silent and he still gazed in the distance."

When the innkeeper had told his simple story, I brushed my sleeve across my eyes, and asked where he had been buried?

"Half of the town had heard the singing and were in tears; the next morning we agreed to bury him

properly, so we rolled him in bandages and a dozen men carried him to yonder knoll and buried him there," said he, pointing some little distance above the village.

"I took the instrument," he continued, "as I had given most of the cloth for the burial. I pulled it from his stiffened fingers. Some advised me to throw it away, but I have not been afraid of it."

"The last of a great race of men," I said. "I knew him and want the instrument for a keepsake."

On learning that I could play it, he consented to receive the price of the cloth, that he had brought, and I was glad that I had not permitted myself to refuse, at the hand of the rich Yi, much more than I had lost, nor did I complain when the innkeeper reckoned up an enormous amount of cloth for the burial shroud of one man, and a high price per yard.

CHAPTER XXII

Search Rewarded

It was a market day in the town, and I bought a farmer's shield-like hat, large enough to drop over one's face if one chooses not to be seen.

When the sun had dropped well into the west, I started back by a circuitous route, for the village that I had visited the night before. I spent the night in the open, under a huge tree in a grove above the village. The town was too small to boast of an inn; nor would I have wanted to stop with the people overnight.

In the morning I began at one end of the town, playing and singing at the front of dwellings and shops, receiving a cash here and another there. Thus I earned my breakfast. Finally, I reached the house where I had seen the rich Yi enter the previous night, and crossing to the opposite side of the street, played, but receiving no attention from its inmates, I walked slowly to the front of the house and took note of every detail of the structure. It was as unpretentious as the score of others about it. From the size of the dwelling I believed that the occupants must be small in number. I played and sang over long at the gate, but no one greeted me, and my

heart sank. A crowd of boys were at my heels, and I must needs move on.

Could it be possible that she was not there, and that the move of the night before had been a ruse on the part of the wily Yi, knowing that I would watch and follow. Then I remembered the girl's strength of character and felt ashamed to think that I had expected her to run to meet me at the first sound of my voice, at the risk of disclosing our relations.

In the afternoon, I again made a partial round of the village, and stopped before the gate of the Yi house. I did not dare to own the bitterness of my disappointment, when I turned away without seeing signs of life within.

Just before it grew dark, I climbed up the mountain side, and stood in front of a great rock where I could be easily seen by anyone from the Yi compound. Then, as the shadows of the night deepened, a thousand specters of doubt assailed me. Two years had passed since I had seen her, or had known anything of her; in that time what change may not have taken place? I shuddered when I recalled the methods used, at different times, to compel her to become the wife of men of other people's choosing. Who could forever resist such a system of remorseless persecution? Then, as I thought of the purpose of the rich Yi to make her his concubine, I was seized with a chill of ague and hate for the round,

fat face of her master. I wondered why I had not left him alone after dragging him out of the water. How long it seemed since that terrible struggle! If I had merely turned his head uphill instead of down, or if I had simply left him alone! Tong-siki's face crept into the gloom, and I knew that my thoughts were murder, and I sat down in utter wretchedness. The reaction of the last few days, from feverish anticipation to disappointment, touched my soul with its icy fingers of despair. If Ewa had been there and free, there would have been some sign of recognition, I bitterly thought. That people were in the house, I knew from the smoke rising from the chimney at evening time. It all meant, it seemed to me, that she had become the property of another. At times, as I sat there in my despondency, the chirping of crickets and katydids beat in on my mind; then again, I heard nothing and felt nothing but the maddening misery of my own heart.

Thus I sat till the twinkling lights of the houses beneath went out, and the people were wrapped in the quiet of slumber, and a late moon had risen, casting the shadows of the mountain at my back, out over the village and far out across the plain, as if jealously sheltering the evil thoughts of men and pityingly covering their passions and misery. I thought of old Mayo and his wonderful talent; of his great devoted heart; of his fate—turned out on the street to die without a kind word, or tender hand

to make him forget the sting of death. Music had been a phantom leading him always, but to no destination. Had I, like him wasted the years for a Will-o'-the-wisp, glad, if at last I might, though robbed of the reality, caress the memory of a sweet voice and kind looks and in my despondency, my soul whispered it would be even so.

As I looked before me, suddenly a white garment glinted in the shadows, and I was aware of a figure moving noiselessly up the path toward me. On it came, with now and then a pause as if uncertain of the way. A great hope surged through me and I waited without a sign. Unconsciously, I put out my hand and it touched the lute. I picked it up and passed my fingers over the strings, the apparition paused and seemed on the point of taking flight.

"Ewa," I said, and in a moment was at her side. . . . I led her to the foot of the great rock. She came as innocent as I had known her years ago at the Hermitage. How long we sat there, her head pillowed on my arm, I do not know. Out in the village, a cock called with clarion-like note, and immediately lights twinkled from a window here, and another there, warning us, that the intruding day was near at hand.

Then she told me of the struggle of these months and years to preserve her maidenhood for me. She knew that I would come, she said, and told me how she had watched the faces of strangers and listened

to the sound of every voice, and on that morning had heard and seen me before I reached her house, and followed me with her eyes all day long. She told me how she had held before the mind of her master the possibility of again placing her in the palace, thereby making her a source of wealth and power. She knew vastly more about the eunuch than he did, and though her master was in mortal fear of him, she could keep his hopes alive to his all-mastering passion for national rank. She told me of their long flight from the capital, and how she, herself, had planned so that there could be no trace of them found among his relatives, as that was the only means she had to gain complete control over him. While it would hide her from me, yet it was the only way to protect herself from the aggressions of the Yi clan. She told me how her master at last, despairing of a chance to replace her in the palace, had proposed to make her his concubine; and how she had fled to a precipitous rock on the mountain and threatened to throw herself down if he should attempt to approach her; how on that rocky pinnacle she had pointed out to him the advantage of her return, and had herself started a messenger northward to make investigations, and her master had again yielded, and they were waiting daily for the return of the messenger, which accounted for Mr. Yi's fright on my making close inquiries regarding his family. He feared that the messenger had been

detained, and that I was a spy, seeking his life. She told me how she had long played upon his greed for gold and rank, and was afraid of a time when his passion for her would outweigh his avariciousness; but now that I had come to claim her, her troubles would be at an end. The future, she said, with a happy smile, held no fears for her.

"At those times of struggling, I looked north and prayed for your coming," said she. "Once I ran away, and I might have escaped; but where? Fortunately I fell in with a Christian family, and oh! Sung-yo! I learned a great lesson—a lesson of obedience and sacrifice. I learned of the Christian's God, and then returned to serve my master. He was so glad to see me back that he forgot to rave, as is his wont when he is defied. I told him that the Christian religion sent me back. He thought that it must be a good religion, and asked many questions about it; but, when I told him that it meant sacrifice for the good of others, and the giving up of ambitions, if they were for selfish ends, he asked no more questions, but simply said that no doubt it was a good thing for servants, but for a man of affairs like himself, it was foolish and undesirable."

"O, how I prayed for your coming!—He answered me. The Christian God is my God, and I will evermore obey him. I have never in all my years of slavery obeyed anyone to whom I had not given will. There are two now whom I will obey—Him,

and, how sweet, to will my life into yours. I am yours forever and ever. I am happy, happy," and tears stood out on her long lashes.

A delirium of ecstacy swept through me, and somewhere down in the elemental regions of the soul, arose feelings that caressed with the voice where words were dumb; and all my years of struggle and pain were as if they had never been. The moonlight swept back the shadows of the mountain and I found her large dark eyes gazing into mine, and I said many things and she replied in words that I have long since hid away in the sanctuary of my memory. Nor will I do violence by entering there. In lonely hours I walk around its closed walls with gentle tread and dumbly feel its surface, and when I press my lips against the wall it glows and palpitates with dear words and looks that will never die. When the moon's rays bent westward, aslant in our faces, we talked of the future, and of my history. I told her of my family, of the hunchback girl whom I had seen, for the second time, on the day that I had fished her master out of the flood, to which she replied by a merry laugh, then soberly said:

"You were mistaken. It is true that she is deformed, but she is intelligent, and more than all, affectionate, and I love her."

I told her of the accident of my posing as a seer on that island. All these things she had heard from

the lips of old Mayo. I told her of the few acres of rice land I still owned in the region of Pyeng-Yang.

Then I urged her to flee with me. Starting in the early evening of the next night, we could reach the seacoast before pursuit could be made. Boats were to be had which would take us north; then in the shadow of the palace wall we would be safe. Tong-siki was my powerful friend, and my father, the old Sung-ji, though dead, still had many friends who would do much under a promise of a little money.

I painted in glowing colors the future; how Tong-siki was heading a new order of things, and that I had dedicated my life to his service for our country; how she and I would bless our people in our lives; womanhood would be freed and have equal rights with men in the law courts; slavery would be abolished; how her sweet face should look into the face of multitudes, as a mother in the face of her children, and she should wipe away their tears. She was silent, and I thought I saw in her face a refusal, and a strange fear crept down in my heart.

"Our country is calling for you," said I. "The tide that laps the shores murmurs the name of Ewa —Listen! the breezes that rustle over these rugged peaks calls you, every wild flower on the mountain nods to Ewa, and every wounded face trodden down by the wayside beckons to you. The sun will not beat upon you, and the cold will pass by another

way; for nature will join in shielding you. Come," I cried, and when my voice broke, she put her arms around my neck and said:

"I am yours for your own dear sake, and if that will make your arm strong and your heart brave to dare I shall be content; but listen—fifty li from here is a Christian chapel where, sometimes, is performed the marriage rite. I am a Christian. I was not born a slave. I am by right a free woman, and if I will, I may accompany you there."

A little later, we arose and walked together to the bottom of the hill, and I stood a long time looking down the moonlit road where she had gone.

CHAPTER XXIII

Until Death

When the sun rose, it found me twenty li to the south, singing from door to door. Through the forenoon cash flowed into my hand a steady stream. At noon, I bought my dinner, then lay down on the floor of an inn and was lost in profound slumber.

When the candle was lighted, I awoke with a start, and was soon out on my way back to the village that sheltered Ewa. In two hours' time I stood with her by the side of the gray rock. After a moment of hushed greeting, she led the way into the street and turned northward. I tied her bundle in mine, with a sweet sense of ownership. All night we traveled on, and I wondered at her buoyancy and tirelessness. When the light of day broke over us she trilled and whistled to the multitude of birds that awoke around us with their morning song. Instead of the demure pensive maiden, one always expects, she was radiant with life, and talked of the habits of birds and wild animals of the hills. She ordered me to stand still while she chirruped to a sparrow till it was almost within her grasp, then she laughed with musical sweetness. I trudged heavily at her side, feeling my dull inferiority. Each mo-

ment brought fresh surprises, and, marveling, I tried to place her among other women. "Not a type of a class, but a rare specimen of what our women might be," I thought.

When we arrived at the village of our destination Ewa pulled her cloak over her head and I led the way, as she directed, to a house near the center of the village, where we parted, she retiring to the women's apartments. The sound of happy greeting assured me that we were with friends. The door was opened to me by the church caretaker, at the front, and I was bidden to enter with great heartiness. The usual salutations were exchanged, and then I explained the nature of our visit.

"Just in time," was the reply, "our pastor will be here this afternoon. Was I a Christian? No? Who did you say she was? That slave girl, did you say?"

The next moment, to my amazement, he was slamming the door behind him, and his animated greetings reached my ears. The door swung back from its insecure fastenings, and I saw Ewa demurely bowing as any country maiden, her vivacity having all fled. In a moment my host was back.

"Of course you don't understand," said he, briskly, interpreting my look of inquiry. "Christian communities live differently. We speak to the women, and they are not afraid of being greeted. We are all on a plane of equality. While they have

their place and we ours, as the Creator intended, yet she is not beneath us in point of respect or privileges. Yes, it was difficult at first. We had to sacrifice some of the rubbish of our old customs and not a little pride. There is power in the cross to make right all our ills. The time is coming," he added with enthusiasm, "when injustice will be no more; when both men and women shall have their rights; when in all our land there will not be heard the fall of the paddle of the yamens."

It seemed to be a favorite topic of his, and I was bewildered with what the Christians had accomplished in their communities, and with what they proposed to do. He talked of what they had done, as Tong-siki talked of what we would do; but then, I reflected, "they are dealing with small groups of illiterate people; while we are working with the forces that are at the head of the nation, and must be able, if successful, to do in a day what will require many years for the Christians to do."

When the pastor arrived I was surprised to see a tall Western foreigner. He greeted me heartily. He had much to do in preparing his group of Christians for an evening gathering, at which certain rites, in connection with their reception into the church were to be performed. The paradoxical attitude of the Christian teachers astonished me. They used every means possible to secure a follower, but made his entrance into the church exacting and extremely

difficult. I saw discipline as rigid as that of an army; yet the people loved the man who presided over them, and I had no doubt that they were ready to pluck out their eyes for him.

Late in the afternoon, arrangements were made for the wedding ceremony. I was coached on a certain formula of which I remembered nothing. I had not seen Ewa since arriving, and when she was brought in her head was covered. A large body of Christians and a few townspeople crowded the place, till they blocked the doors with eager faces, and extended back, a jostling mass into the dusty street. We were finally led into the open court, where there would be more room. Mats had been spread on the ground, and someone slung an awning across bamboo poles, and the affair took on an appearance of importance. Feeling bewildered, I asked what I was expected to do; saying that the lessons that I had committed had eluded my grasp. I was told to do as ordered at the time. Then Ewa was told to do as ordered at the time. They smiled when they saw me remove a bit of her chang-ot[1] to see if it were really she. She smiled back at me, and when I straightened up I saw only her dear face, around which the company appeared as a halo. I was repeating answers to questions as they were dictated to me.

[1] A face covering used for the seclusion of women.

"Will you love her?" the light-haired preacher asked.

"Why, yes; I can't help it," I replied, and felt surprised at the titter that followed. Then I repeated—"till death us do part."

Then Ewa was speaking and answered all their questions without prompting.

The ceremony was over and they led my bride away, and I drifted into the crowd, and interest in me seemed to have vanished. I sought Ewa, and, at first, had to converse through a third person. Presently she appeared and requested a stay for a few days.

I rightly surmised that she wanted me to learn more about the new faith. Books were placed in my hands and I labored with them faithfully for three days. I had never been a dull student, but here I made a complete failure; while I droned over these books and listened to enthusiastic appeals, my mind was elsewhere, planning for our journey northward. We must hasten to the coast, I thought, and take the coast steamer without delay. I gave ready assent to everything. It seemed to me that the Christians were good, the world was good, and even the round face of the rich Yi was tolerable.

During these days, I saw nothing of my bride except a silent greeting now and then at the door of the women's apartments, or a privileged glance at her as she stood among the other worshipers. On

a certain afternoon, I followed her out on the hillside among the second growth pines, and she told me the whole story of her life; how she had grown up with better favored children, and had observed all that they learned; how they became willing associates; and how she loved to compel them to search her out and ask favors of her; how, in a spirit of amusement, someone had tried to teach her to read; and how she never forgot a character and sought eagerly for more, and soon astonished her master by supplying a Chinese character that he wanted in a certain letter he was writing to a magistrate; how she spent every hour possible in the woods, becoming familiar with the birds, dumb animals and insects; how some regarded her with superstitious reverence; how she had conquered her master and put her life in the task; how he feared and loved her; and how she feared him. While talking she had been looking steadily in my face and suddenly asked:

"Do you believe?"

"Yes! that is, I suppose so, I believe you, and religion is a part of you." She looked away with a baffled air and seeing her distress, "Tell me," I urged, "I will listen."

"No one can tell you more. It is doing, not hearing," she replied, and a look of suffering came over her face. I was angry with the Christians, but before I could say anything she spoke:

"Do you know where I must go when we leave here?"

"Go?" I repeated, "to the capital where we shall be secure from pursuit," and I was on the point of launching out with a minute description of the plans that I had materialized for our safety, and the happy future in store for us. Her look of pain deepened and checked my words.

"Do you know what I have made you?" she asked.

"A happy man," I said, and laughed loudly. Tears came into her eyes, and I bent down playfully to laugh away her mood, she lifted her hands, and I sat down by her side soberly.

"See!" said she, extending her wrist, "a long time ago some superstitious impulse seized my master to have me branded or marked in some way. He remembered an old tradition of our race, that our ancestors tattooed their bodies. If he has an idea, however erratic, he never releases it, and in time he brought a needle and pigments, and tattooed the sign of the cross on my arm, performing the work with his own hands. His superstition infected me, and I believed I was to become a victim of the cross, indeed, there were times when I should have welcomed that instrument of torture if it would have released me from pending dangers. I often went to the store-room where the heavy piece of wood was kept, and passed my hand over it; it seemed terri-

ble to me, yet I often sat by it and stroked it with my hands, as if it were a living thing. You know that on our street corners there are found the village idols with their hideous faces. Well, on the rough front of the cross I could see a face, and in the superstition of my childhood, I talked to it and promised that some day I would embrace it and yield my life there. In these morbid fancies I would often, in my dreams, feel the thongs on my wrists and ankles, and feel the cross under me.

"When I thought you were to be sacrificed in the city of Pyeng-Yang, I wanted you with all my soul. I knew your previous national rank and the condescension you made in loving a slave. I knew that you could never marry me, but I wanted to mark you as a slave, then I could visit your grave and call it mine. I, therefore, crept into your cell that awful night in Pyeng-Yang.

"Finally I became a Christian, and the thing of shame and expected instrument of my death, I found to be an emblem of holiness and victory." She paused, and commenced humming a Christian hymn in a sad, low voice, "In the cross of Christ I glory." "Then all my fear of the heavy beam," she added, "was gone, and I became proud of the mark on my arm and made a vow to Him who yielded up his life on the cross that I would be true to Him; and I saw in the cross the hope of Korea, and not her misery and ruin.

"Then, at last, Sung-yo, you did find me as I hoped and feared—you came—and my soul knew you for its master—the only human being that has been its master." Here her voice sank to a whisper and her eyes for the first time fell to the ground, and she continued: "I yielded to you my heart; nay, a storm seized me and swept me to you; and, after I had done the irrevocable thing and had broken my vow, I thought that you would become a Christian and understand."

"Understand!" I gasped.

"I thought," she continued in the same low tone, "if you knew Him, you would know what duty means—how one can cheerfully lay aside friends and the fruits of years of sacrifice, with love and hope and life." Her face grew white and she moistened her lips and lifting those wonderful eyes to my face, continued, "I must go back to my master."

I looked at her for some moments and tried to solve the riddle with a feeling of numbness creeping over me. After a few moments waiting, the force of her words dawned upon me.

"Go back?" I repeated, "go back to your master? but you belong to me—you were not born a slave—you were stolen from freedom and your father was murdered and your mother was also sold into worse than slavery and her baby torn from her arms; and you—what had you done in your innocent babyhood that you should live under the lash? By what

law, whether Christian, or otherwise, are you required to return to him? Nay, but does not a just law rather insist that you have the rights of liberty? Indeed, what is this Christian law that strengthens the hands of the vicious and cruel, and is ready to seize a helpless, bruised captive and return her to a monstrous enemy, to be torn and trampled under foot? Nay, I am more just than your new faith, dear maiden. I swear by all that is good, and I must include your God, that I shall give every ounce of my flesh and my last drop of blood, rather than let you fall into the power of your old master. You are mine by your Christian laws: for were we not wedded under those laws, and did they not say you were mine? Then if mine, how, then, his? Said it not till death? You are mine! mine! mine!"

I spoke with passion and a feeling of intense hate for the rich Yi sprung up in my heart. "I will kill him," I thought.

She took my hand and held it to her cheek and tried to soothe me for I was trembling with excitement. She gave vent to notes of music—words of no language, but resembling the soft tones of a cooing dove; its tender yearning sweetness drove my passion from me.

Finally she said, "That is why I said I broke my vow, I have done you a great and terrible wrong." I attempted to speak but she checked me. "In my weakness I proposed to you a means of our mar-

riage and was happy. Alas for our happiness! I am strong now. You are right regarding the cruelty and ruin worked against me and my family. I do not propose to return to my master because they killed my father and sold my mother into slavery; but, because I fled from my master as a criminal flees from justice, and in the eyes of the law I have merited punishment. Thereby have I brought my new faith into contempt. The people will say that the Christians are thieves and encourage lawlessness. Think not that my bondage is not hateful to me, or that the presence of the rich Yi does not fill my soul with moral nausea, and that the life with you would not be sweet, but I have another Master, whom I must not disobey. For his sake I must give up happiness and go back to my terrible bondage." She paused, then spoke rapidly, as if in fear of losing her courage.

"For you to return with me means that you are also a slave in the eyes of our law. You have a great work with your friend Tong-siki, and the slave girl would be a curse in your home. While our hearts are young, we might ignore the opinion of others; but a time would come when your slave wife would be a blight upon your life. Who in that proud capital would accept you, who, according to our laws, as long as bound to me, is as much a slave as I?"

"It would be vain to hope that my master would

part with me unless, indeed, you could place him in power at the capital, but your own principles forbid such an act even though the gift might lay in your hand. I am your wife. Cruel death may find me sometime, but it will be as your virgin wife." Her voice had grown lower and lower, and broke at last.

"When will you go?" I asked, as if I had accepted her arrangements.

"After dark to-night," she replied, searching my face, as if disappointed that I had accepted her decision.

The next night found us on our way back, and Ewa's protestations grew feeble when I announced that I was going with her, and a positive happiness rang out in her voice.

CHAPTER XXIV

For Conscience' Sake

The dawn had just set loose its thousands of echoes when we arrived at the village where lived the rich Yi. As we made our appearance in his compound, a buzz of excitement went over the place. Ewa's absence had not been noticed; everyone supposing that she was still at the retreat where her master had tried to hide her from me; at that place it was thought she had returned to her master. Outside of her master's immediate presence she was in the habit of doing as she chose, and, having hinted of leaving, no one had raised any inquiry. Seeing me in her company seemed to argue trouble from Seoul, and the suspicion that I was a spy was confirmed.

Soon Ewa's master appeared as if in great haste, and when he saw me his jaw fell, and stammering wanted to know when I had come back, and where I was going. Ewa took the matter out of my hands and making room for her master and me to sit down, remained standing in a respectful attitude.

"Listen," said she, "I have something to tell you. Years ago I had a father and he was wealthy, more wealthy, if my baby memory serves me right, than

you, sir, have ever been. He was seized one day by a magistrate and beaten until he signed away all his property, and his mangled body was brought home. We took refuge in a servant's quarters. There lived in that town a man by your name, sir, and for information and aid to the magistrate, he reaped large benefits from my father's property. The night after my father's burial, a party of young men came from the home of this neighbor who had caused our ruin and tried to seize my mother and carry her to his home, to a life infinitely worse than that of slavery. She fled with me on her back. For a time fortune was kind to us, but, after days of exposure and hunger and weariness, we were overtaken and my mother sold on the street as you would sell a wandering horse or cow. I was torn from her arms and, to confuse my mind in the matter, I was passed through the hands of several persons under pretense of a sale, until I was finally owned as a slave by the man who caused the murder of my father."

During the recital Mr. Yi had moved uneasily and his face became livid; he made as if to speak. "Wait!" said she, "I have more to say. I hated the hand that fed me. I saw on it the blood of my father and mother. I was obedient, but often looked at my face in deep pools, and resolved that, at some time, I would throw away the life that was becoming intolerable under the control of a murderer.

Then there came into my life a face with true, simple manhood, and he gave himself to me, not in words, but by looks—then I wanted to live. I saw him stricken down and I supposed dead on a battlefield, and again I sought the pools for escape. Finally I fled from my master's home and I found the Christian's God, who sent me back to him, and taught me to look at his red hands with peace in my heart. A few days ago the dead came back to me," and she laid her hand in mine as she spoke, "and we went to a Christian chapel and were married according to the ordinances of God. He is my husband—yea, I am his forever. In a few days we might have been in Seoul under the protection of powerful friends, but I came back because I am a Christian, and he, also."

She had not taken her eyes from her master's face from the beginning, and spoke in a low, clear voice. He had been looking from face to face, and when she said married, he caught his breath, and when she ceased speaking, looked as if he had received a mortal blow. "Married!" he echoed, "married, did you say? when?" "Four days ago."

He staggered to his feet and lowered a moment, swaying like a drunken man, his face purple with wrath. I had risen with him, and Ewa stood with her large eyes fixed upon his face, her lips white. His words came in muffled sounds, without articulation, first like base rumblings, then in a high fal-

setto. I touched Ewa's arm and we stepped out into the open yard. He followed and tramped back and forth in brute fury. Finally his words were clear enough.

"Curse her! kill her! kill them! hate me, did you? hand red, is it? murderer, you say?"

I noticed a division among the servants; two, who evidently had been in his service a long time, stood attention, seemingly expecting to receive an order to perform some service, while others, employed from the immediate section, shrank from him.

Presently he broke in a long stream of invectives, reviling his slave and coupling my name with hers in passionate denunciation. He strode up to her with uplifted hand as if to strike, and shot his face out into hers; she did not flinch; indeed, she had not taken her eyes from his face since he began to rave.

So far I had not said a word. She had adroitly concentrated his whole attention upon herself, and if I had left her alone with the problem, how different the results might have been! When I saw his hand raised, my blood leaped, and in an instant I had struck him across the cheek, a blow that staggered him and made my hand tingle long afterward. Instantly he was upon me like a mad bull; with a club I felled him to the ground. The next moment a dozen hands were at my throat and I lay on the

ground some yards from him, my hands pinioned behind me. Slowly he raised his fat body from the ground; wiped the blood from his forehead, where I had hit him; at the sight of which his fury knew no bounds; seizing the stick that I had dropped he lunged at me and I knew that it meant death; then, at a bound, Ewa was between us.

He paused and looked her over, and laughed a diabolical laugh. "I kill my slaves when I want to and have no more use for them; four days ago, did you say?" Then he called to his servants. Two of them seized Ewa by the wrists, while a third tugged at a lock on a door opening directly upon the yard, but moved with slow reluctance. Yi cursed the man and with his own hands tore the door from its fastenings. A heavy cross was dragged out, and at sight of it fiendish delight filled his soul.

Ewa was unresistingly laid on the cross face downward, her arms extended, and with his own fingers, her master tied her arms and feet, the while cursing and reviling; then over her clothing he poured a pail of water that the paddle might bite the harder.

The head servant was commanded to strike; he lifted the paddle over his head and it came down with a thud; but so skillfully aimed that the end struck the ground, doing the girl no harm. Again and again he struck fierce blows, but they hurt her

not. I called and begged them to put me in Ewa's place; I threatened; I promised money; I pleaded and commanded.

"Your turn is coming, son of Sung-ji, slave!" he raved.

Suddenly he saw that the beating was a farce, and seizing the paddle from the hands of his minion, he struck the girl a terrible blow. There was a shock, an upward spasmodic throw of the head, but no word escaped her. Again and again he struck her, but still she made no sign. At each blow I writhed and tugged at the thongs, and cursed the man that bound me. Then one of the servants eagerly offered to do the beating, and reaching out his hands, he interfered with the descending paddle, and instead of falling on the thighs of the girl it struck her across the back. A shudder ran through her frame, and she laid her head down on the rough beam. He again raised the paddle and struck her across the thighs, as he had intended, but she felt it not. A servant begged him to look at her face, and he stopped beating. Others cut the thongs that bound her hands and feet, but she did not move; then they picked her up and carried her into a room near at hand and laid her on the floor. Her master looked after her with his hands hanging helplessly at his side, his fury gone.

Someone cut my hands loose and I ran to Ewa; no one interfered. I called for water and it was

brought. I took her head in my lap and called her by name—"Ewa! Ewa! O, Ewa!"—I bathed her head and hands and then laid my cheek against hers, and hung her arms around my neck, but they dropped limply at her side. A drop of blood was on her lips and I kissed it away; I forgot the presence of others and begged her to wake up and come out with me where the birds were singing. "The quail is whistling for you, Ewa," I cried, "the flowers are nodding with smiles for you; every blade of grass is a beckoning hand. Come, Ewa, wake up, come with me."

Heavy breathing at the door caused me to glance up; Yi stood alone, his face drawn and old. When he saw Ewa's face he stumbled back into the yard, and I heard prolonged wailings—"I-go-o-o."

At sight of him, a fury for revenge surged through me, and laying the dear head down I went out into the yard with a terrible resolve burning in my breast, but what I saw stayed the tide of passion. Yi, with his head down on the ground, was wailing as our people wail for the dead. He had picked up a stone and was beating his own head with it and crying in unmistakable anguish. I kicked him savagely and he looked me over as if his eyes had not taken me in.

Returning to Ewa, I straightened her limbs, and again bathed her face and hands. Presently her color returned and eyelids trembled. She looked up,

dazed, and I held my breath, waiting for a sign of consciousness. Presently she looked into my eyes and smiled, and I bathed her face in tears. "Don't," said she, and placed her arms about my neck. I laughed and asked her if she would sit up. "Come," I said, "we are free, let us go." Her arms fell away wearily, and she looked at me long, with a puzzled expression on her face which changed to pain, then to pity. Finally she asked me to raise her feet; I did so, and she watched me intently and sighed.

"They are dead," she whispered, "they are dead." An ugly, deformed girl crept in at the open door and held Ewa's hand. "More deformed than you, mistress," Ewa said. "I am half dead, while you may walk and live." Presently she asked for a needle and pressed the point into her limbs, "dead!" she said, "dead!"

I put my face down to hers. "Better had it been if I had not wakened," she whispered, then she closed her eyes and appeared to sleep, but finally opened them and smiled up in my face.

"I have thought it all out. You must return to your people and fight the battles for our country with your friend. You said many things that made me happy; chief of all was the prospect of living to help other women; I would be a burden now. My master will not beat me any more, he will have to feed and clothe that which he has mangled, while

life lasts. He beat me because he loved and—hated me; he will love me no more, nor will he hate me, now that there will be no cause for jealousy. He wanted a bright toy that he always both feared and loved, then he trampled it beneath his feet; he will look at the battered body and wonder why he cared anything for it. I will suffer no more with him than—" here she paused and battled with her feelings, "than I would with you. I would like to look in your eyes and have you touch my hand, and your voice would soothe the pain, and you would tell me about the birds and flowers, but that would burden you. When a woman is useless she should be thrown away. God made her so."

I protested in tears my love and constancy. I said that she had offered her body to be battered and bruised for me; that if she had not interfered I would have been a worse mangled heap than she.

"Leave you here? Never! Where I go, Ewa, you go. I followed you as a boy races over the fields after the thistledown, I sought through toil and want, through heat and cold, but you were always just beyond my grasp. I wearied not through the years, and when, at last, I held you in my grasp, the years of struggle were as nothing for the joy of possessing you; but I seized you too rudely, and now you are crushed and broken. If I had not struck your master, he had not bruised

you. You gave your life for me, Ewa. Leave you Ewa? Never!" She looked up with a glad light.

"Say it again!" she said, "say it again, say 'you gave your life for me, Ewa.'"

"You gave your life for me, Ewa," I repeated. She smiled and closed her eyes in evident physical pain. Later she looked up.

"Go!" she said, "you are his slave as much as I; he will mangle your body worse than mine. Go!" she whispered through white lips, "go while you have time." I answered by putting my cheek against hers; she looked baffled, but smiled.

I watched at her side through the day, and when her mind wandered, a great anguish crept down in my heart and I feared what my lips refused to name.

The hunchback dressed the bruised body with a tenderness and dexterity that surprised me, and I wondered that I had ever thought her foolish.

When night closed in I remembered that I had not seen Yi since morning, and that his wailings had soon died out. I went out into the yard with reckless indifference to danger, sought for him as a person does a reptile, whose proximity is intolerable, yet fascinated with a horror of its nearness. I searched through the grounds and noted the absence of servants; then I smiled with the fierce gladness at the thought that they had fled to escape complication with the law, and that other members of the family were cowering in some neighboring

ward, leaving me to uninterrupted revenge. At the end of the compound I tugged open a door; on the farther side of the room sat the object of my hate. I had picked up an ironing club and at a bound stood over him, "Die!" I said, through clinched teeth.

He looked up with a dull light in his eyes, and raised no hand in defense; "die!" he repeated, and chuckled softly to himself then he looked across the room and his jaws dropped, and he twined his fingers foolishly. He had dragged the cross into the room and was looking at the terrible instrument of torture. "She was there," he whispered confidentially, "I saw her with blood on her lips."

My hand dropped to my side and I backed out of the room, and left him still gazing at the cross, a silly look on his face. "Justice," I thought, "has already taken its revenge."

I found Ewa with a bright spot on either cheek, and her mind wandering. She talked of her walks among the groves that she loved so well, of picking flowers and listening to the birds. All night long I sat on one side, and the hunchback girl on the other. It was evident that the slave girl had been greatly loved by her young mistress. In the early morning Ewa asked for water, and as I held the cup to her lips she smiled into my face.

"It is better," said she, "you need not leave me now, it will not be long, and then you will not be a slave." She then looked at her wrist.

"It was the cross, my ruin," she sighed, "and my hope, the hope of Korea, Sung-yo. I have a request —will you grant it, Sung-yo?"

"With my life," I replied.

"Bury me secretly, and do not bring my master before the magistrate; I am only a slave and it will be easy. Only a complaint from you would cause his punishment. 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord,'" she quoted with faltering voice.

I promised.

"And, Sung-yo?"

"Yes."

"You will not seek personal revenge?"

"No."

"The rock where we sat in the moonlight, when I came to you—the wild pigeon nest in the top of it—bury me in its shadow, Sung-yo—in the place where we sat and I was happy, Sung-yo—and—Sung-yo?"

"Yes."

"The Christians do not swathe the dead with bandages, but dress them as if living, and leave their faces uncovered, and lay them away tenderly, as if they were going to sleep. You will look in my face, Sung-yo, before they drop the cold earth upon it?"

"Yes, Ewa," I sobbed.

"Now, say it again—'you gave your life for me, Ewa.'"

"You gave your life for me, Ewa," I repeated, and she smiled.

"O! Sung-yo, would that I could give you a thousand lives. My arms are heavy, Sung-yo—lift them up and put them around your neck—so."

"On the Pyeng-Yang battlefield you promised that somewhere, where men's spirits roam, you would meet me. You will, Sung-yo?"

"Yes, Ewa."

Her voice staggered and her arms fell limply at her side, and when she spoke again it was in a whisper.

"The cr—oss, S—Sung-yo."

I closed the dear eyes, and the hunchback girl, with streaming face, brought in garments, some of which I knew to be her own, made of the finest silk. How beautiful Ewa looked! It was, as she had said, simply going to sleep.

When night fell again, I labored at the foot of the great rock, and the shadows of the mountain covered my misery. My pick struck deep into the bosom of tender memories, and each blow deepened my anguish.

The procuring of a coffin would raise questions in the neighborhood, and I would not be able to keep my promise, so I made a bed of pine boughs at the bottom of the grave.

An hour before daylight I had returned to the hut and fastened my precious dead in a long mat

and raised it to my shoulders. The village was hid in slumber, and followed only by the faithful hunchback girl, I staggered up the mountainside and laid my burden tenderly down beside the open grave.

We had no need of a lantern; the moonlight had driven back the shadows of the mountain, and I laid the remains of my bride on a pillow of pine boughs with the damp, cold earth walling it in. Then I lit a handful of pine splinters; when the light flickered and went out, I covered her face with a bit of matting. I picked up the hoe, but my fingers refused to hold it, then I went to the foot of the grave and arranged the dear feet, and tried to sprinkle them with earth.

The hunchback girl took the hoe from my trembling hand, and I climbed out on the warm earth and hid my face between the loose sod and the rock, and covered my ears. When the light of morning spread over the mountain, I arose and took the hoe from the blistered, trembling hands, and rounded the mound of earth high and pressed it smooth—tenderly, as if my fingers were touching her dear face. A delicate, hemp sandal lay on the ground and I picked it up and hid it in my bosom. Over my head, on the top of the naked rock, a dove cooed for its mate, and I turned my face northward to the distant hills, and the anguish swelled within me.

CHAPTER XXV

Dangers Ahead

A STEAMER was announced off at sea, and I went down to the jetty to watch with others who were anxious to take passage northward. I had been waiting a week at the port of Kun-san, with a score of others, for the incoming steamer. Their animation and hopelessness at sight of the smoke on the horizon, stirred no response in my heart. When the anchor dropped out in the bay, I took a sanpan,[1] rode out and climbed up the gangway.

A Japanese sailor addressed me in a coarse language, and I was compelled to show my ticket to a dozen irresponsible persons, but I cared nothing for these things.

A few hours later we were steaming out to sea. I leaned on the rail and fixed my eyes on the southern horizon, beyond which, somewhere, was a mound, and I looked as I have done each day, and shall do through the years.

Before darkness settled over the sea dinner was announced for steerage passengers, and I went below. We had reached the open sea, and the steamer rolled and pitched in a most alarming way. On

[1] Japanese row-boat.

shore some had eaten nothing that day, in order that they might be able to take the value of their passage money out of the company in heavy meals, but now they had changed their minds.

I was not sick, so carried my bowl of rice out on deck for the sake of fresh air through someone at my elbow was discourteous enough to hint that I needed fresh air. Opposite me sat a fat passenger who also held Neptune in contempt. He wore a spotless suit, and hat and shoes made of the finest material. He held a fan before his face to ward off the offensive odors of the ship. He sat with dignity, and looked with a glance of hauteur at his fellow passengers, as if he scorned the humiliation of traveling steerage. When he spoke he assumed the look of benign condescension, and many were the deferential glances to flatter his vanity. The preservation of his dignity seemed to have been his life's ambition. His feet were curled under him in the approved attitude of the sages. The little table of rice was at his feet, while a bowl of soup and a bit of fish completed his bill of fare. He raised the bowl of soup and glanced up, as if he indulged in such vulgar acts of eating only when aboard ship or in the company of his inferiors. With maddening dignity he carried it to his lips, but a sudden, swift roll and plunge of the steamer sent the warm liquid slipping up his sleeve and over his immaculate silk coat. He set the bowl down with a loud, undignified

snort and a look that could have annihilated the steamer and many square miles of the sea. The next plunge of the steamer sent the bowl rolling across the deck and the bowl of rice dancing after it. Our dignified friend, seeing his dinner fleeing, sprang to his feet with the agility of a coolie and gave pursuit. Down they went across the deck, the bowl leaving a white path of hunger tempting rice in its wake. At one moment his fingers had nearly seized the fleeing bowl, when a second roll of the steamer gave it another turn and, describing a semi-circle, it passed between his feet and started for the gangway leading to the main deck, with the fat man in pursuit. His fellow passengers were delighted. As the bowl reached the gangway, in his zeal to seize it before the fatal plunge, he lunged forward and, slipping on the scattered rice, shot with toboggan swiftness, head foremost, down the dozen steps and landed comfortably on top of the empty bowl. He lay for a moment as if expecting someone to help him up; but a shout of uproarious laughter from a score of throats jogged his ancient brain into the realization that he was in a new Korea, where every man is expected to look after himself. Picking himself up, he made his way up the gangway with profound gravity, sat down in the stained garments and ordered another bowl of rice, scornfully indifferent to the ripple of merriment that still echoed among the passengers and sailors.

Till then I had not given my fellow passengers a thought. Now I noted that they were made up from all the East: the heavy Chinamen, unobtrusively sitting in groups of their own nationals, who, when the rice tables were carried away, began rattling the dice; the versatile Japanese with a disgusting lack of dress, sitting together chattering like a company of magpies; Koreans in dull, stolid groups giving way to every other aggressive passenger. Their seeming pusillanimity maddened me, but I was as helpless as any other one of our millions who live under discriminating and unjust laws. I saw pacing the deck, among first-class passengers, Americans, Europeans, Chinese, Japanese and Koreans. The whole world seemed to be represented aboard that little steamer.

While my fellow passengers were scrambling for sleeping places and spreading out their blankets on the rough boards of their bunks, I stood out by the rail in the bright moonlight.

Thousands of phosphorescent stars danced at the side of the steamer and a brilliant pathway of light stretched across the sea toward the moon that scudded through the sky and hid for a moment behind a billowy cloud and then burst forth into new glory, as if insistent, that in a world of shadows there is light and hope.

Long I looked down the pathway of light thinking or rather feeling, forward into the future. Grim

fate, the result of our cruel times, had shattered at my feet all that I loved, and yet over its ruins stern duty seemed calling me. My feelings were not without bitterness. Sweet faces and tender looks, like the fragrant violet beneath the heel of the warrior, are to be trampled upon and bruised till one's blood should bathe them into new life. "Domestic peace and security must be bought for the next generation by the lives of this," I reflected; "My country's needs require the shedding of blood." In my sore, grief-stricken heart I felt ready for that day.

Suddenly I was awakened from my thoughts by a hand on my shoulder and, turning, found myself face to face with Tong-siki. His long absence and my struggles and defeats made me cling to him with a delight that surprised and pleased him. His healthy, vigorous look and cheerful spirit put new life into me. We sat down against the skylight of the throbbing, tumbling boat, and he demanded of me the story of the last two years. I told him, leaving out nothing, and he listened without a word of comment, and I might have thought that he heard nothing if each glance had not shown his eyes bent searchingly upon me. When I had told all, he sat in a long thoughtful silence, then spoke as if it were the result of his meditation.

"Wonderful! Wonderful what the new religion can make out of even a fragile slave girl. Sought death, did she, rather than bring reproach upon her

religion? Yet some among us, who boast of our strength, find it a trying ordeal to summon courage to die for a principle. You have suffered, have you?" he added, "but you have a healthy look and I think a healthy brain. You have learned the great lesson that these are not the times to be satiated with good things. Stripped of all selfish happiness in any one individual you may be able to devote yourself to the happiness of the many. Forgive me if I seem unsympathetic; you know that I would give my right hand to promote your happiness, and, while I sincerely sympathize and sorrow with you in your loss, yet I am glad, with a gladness that I cannot explain, that I find you ready to devote your life to our common cause."

Then he told me, in turn, of his life of the past two years. He was now on his way from Japan, returning to the scenes of his old struggles.

Soon after our separation he had been marked as a dangerous man and sought after by the authorities. He was charged with being a traitor. The fact that he offered his life in defense of the Emperor was ground sufficient for jealous officials at the capital to seek his life. Most of his friends fell away in a day. The Independence club was glad to receive him, and were stirred with his manly statesmanlike appeals. Soon that organization was attacked, and its leaders imprisoned, or driven from the country. Among them were some who lost their

heads. To remain in the country for the time meant total impotency and consequent ineffectual battling. While the spirit of reaction was taking place he had resolved to study the Japanese system of government, and had gone to the country for this purpose. His enemies said that he had fled from justice.

Japan, Tong-siki said, was truly friendly and desired the best interest of Korea, if it did not conflict with her own interest. Her officials opened every avenue possible for him to gain information. Statesmen sat with him in patient effort to satisfy his appetite for knowledge.

The trouble between Japan and Korea lies with the multitude of Japanese riffraff who have found their way to Korea, and are outside the Korean law and control, and over whom Japan exercises lax authority. Except a small circle of respected Japanese citizens in our country, the thousands are eagerly engaged in our exploitation. These people, and a few incompetent officials of the Japanese government, have been the bane of Korea.

"Either their people," said he, "will be better controlled by the Japanese authorities, or our streets, in the near future, will run red. Our oppressed race will turn upon their persecutors as soon as they are permeated by the spirit of freedom.

"But that is not the matter that presses upon me at present. You may have heard that there is a price set upon my head, and when I put foot on my

native soil I shall have set in motion the machinery of patriotic devotion and unselfish solicitude for his Majesty. To make sure that the royal family is safe, and, casually, that their hold upon the treasurer's spigot is secure, members of the Cabinet will try to rid the land of my presence.

"Look at me, Sung-yo. Do you think I look like a fanatic who would seek to throw his life away for a dream? Yet I am going back to offer my life for my country. The world laughs at us and asks in derision for an exhibition of manhood, and our people themselves turn to tradition for those who have died for principle. We do not know how to live because we do not know how to die, and we do not die well because we do not live well. If, by giving my life, I could inspire the mind of many hesitating young men of our country to dare to do for our country's reform, it would be a happy gift.

"I may escape the knife, and have taken every precaution to do so by making friends with powerful Japanese diplomats, who will attempt to look to my safety, but I have little confidence in them. Not that they do not purpose to aid, but diplomacy is strong only where there is a supposed exchange of advantages, or where there is a hint of battleships. In my case neither condition exists. Beyond a kindly feeling, my life means nothing to the Japanese, while my destruction is supposed to mean the stability of the present system of official tyranny in

Korea. I want to live, but there are a great many things worse than death; cowardice is one. My place is in the capital, in the hurly-burly of strife, and if I fall, there will be mighty men to take my place.

"I understand that the magistrate with whom you and I had an interesting acquaintance in Pyeng-Yang on the occasion of our first visit there, is now in Seoul and is rapidly rising among the guardians of Korea's greatness. Rumor has it that he is trying to ride two horses at the same time. His sagacity has evidently revealed to him facts that everyone knows, namely, that there is to be a struggle between Russia and Japan for supremacy in the East. One day he gets down a map of Asia, and opens his eyes wide at the extent of Russia's domains; then sends a visiting card to the Russian Legation with the announcement that he is on his way to pay his respects to the representative of the greatest country on the earth. The next day news from his spies announces Japan's war preparation, and he hastens to the Japanese Legation to knock his head on the ground to the representative of the mightiest country on earth. What concerns me most at present is that he is waiting to receive me, with his humiliation in Pyeng-Yang burning in his memory. I suppose I could buy his love with a few strings of cash; but such a purchase would nauseate one in one's grave; yet some think the practice honorable.

"An associate of his who has turned traitor to his political friends has been rewarded with a government appointment at the port, ostensibly Superintendent of Trade, but in reality, appointed to seize all progressionists that should attempt to return from abroad.

"He wrote me many loving letters, and I expect that on my arrival he will express his solicitude by having a servant with his overgrown visiting card at the steamer anchorage, to beg the humble privilege of entertaining me before I proceed to the capital. If he concludes that my bones are worth picking, the exploitation will be his, and I will have the blessed privilege of sneaking into some hiding place, while he will deliver up some wretch to the talons of the noble tribunal in Seoul, who may, after the death sentence is passed, discover that the victim is the wrong man. Never fear, Sung-yo, I intend to part with no cash, nor self-respect to buy safety either at the port or the capital."

We sat on the wind-swept deck far into the night, and he told me of his many experiences in Japan, with many references to Japan's eagerness to measure strength with Russia.

"That pending conflict," he said, "is what has hastened my return to Korea. It will make little difference which country is victorious, for in either case, we will be the victims of exploitation, unless we can prove to the world that we are fit to govern

ourselves. We have failed to prove it so far; but there is manhood and patriotism enough in the country, if it could be marshalled at the right point, to make Korea repeat the wonderful development of Japan. All we want is that the powers will hold off and give us a chance.

"The most bitter thing that I have had to meet since I have been traveling among Americans and Europeans in Japan is the settled opinion on their part that Korea is naturally the rightful prey to either Japan or Russia, provided that they go to war. The logic of their reasoning would be hugely amusing if it did not have such a terrible aspect back of it.

"For the sake of argument, we might suppose that there was a war brewing between Canada and Mexico and, therefore, because either belligerent would march troops into the territory of the United States, the victor should, forsooth, possess that country by right of conquest. Thus are we to be rightful fruits of Japan's conquest over Russia, or Russia's conquest over Japan!

"There are in Europe many smaller countries than ours, whose territorial integrity is preserved and independence recognized by the family of nations. In view of that fact, a remark I heard from a prominent American casts great discredit upon his boasted reasoning faculties. He said that there were not people enough in Korea to live a separate life. I

listened to the statement with a gasp of amazement, remembering that at the time of America's Independence, they had not one third the number of people that we have to-day.

"Obedience to the laws of health and sanitation has added to Japan's population twenty millions of people within the last thirty-five years. Let us learn the same lessons, and within one generation we shall have a population of twenty-five millions of people in Korea.

"In estimating the future the only safe method is an examination of the past. What has Japan done for us? Her previous effort toward reforming our government bore some bitter fruit. A natural result of her puerile methods. Her statesmen held joint meetings with our Cabinet and raised the consideration of the customs of our people. Finally they appeared before his Majesty and with profound gravity advised him, with a hint of Japan's military power to compel the people to cut off their long coat sleeves, cut the hair off from their heads, and break their pipestems in the middle. The last seemed strange when one reflected that nicotine reaches the lips sooner through a short pipestem than through a long one.

"We submitted to the cutting and breaking. Some of us got mad and threw stones, while others of us laughed uproariously in our shortened sleeves. For months the country rocked with silent laughter at

the work of foreign statesmen. Then the noble top-knot was reërected.

"The really big thing that they did was to compass the murder of the Queen, which you and I saw. Yet I must think, that in some sentimental way, the Japanese wish us well. But to fight big battles and win victories, and administer the affairs of an alien race are two vastly different problems. The latter will never be done successfully by a people who despise the subjects of the administration. Japanese, as individuals, must learn to respect Koreans, as individuals, before they can commence the alphabet of our reform.

"What Russia may elect to do, provided she gains control of Korea, is a deeper question still. International jealousy, in that case, would be infinitely stronger and might serve to check that country where Japan would be allowed a free hand. Still, much would depend upon the reforms we may be able to inaugurate in Seoul."

I tried to dissuade Tong-siki from returning to the capital at this time, urging that it would be a useless sacrifice, and that I did not believe the people were educated to the point where they would appreciate, or respond to such sacrifice.

He replied that life in a foreign land, while his country was suffering and endangered, had become hateful and intolerable.

"I was never given to impatience," he added, look-

ing over the prow of the steamer at the white-capped waves glistening in the moonlight, "but since coming aboard this steamer I have, with difficulty, controlled my impatience to set foot on shore and meet whatever awaits me. It may be—it probably will be—death."

The moon had dropped below the horizon engulfing the ship in the deeper shadows of the night before we turned in. Tong-siki left his first-class privileges and joined me among the steerage passengers. By wedging ourselves between two half-seasick men, who were rolling and sliding with each movement of the ship, we found rest for the remaining hours of the night. Tong-siki immediately fell into a deep sleep, but I tossed and tumbled in fearful apprehension of what the morrow would bring forth for my friend.

I must, at last, have dropped into a sleep, for suddenly I sat up, confused by the clatter of feet overhead. Light was shining in at the portholes, and many of my companions had gone on deck. I looked for Tong-siki, but he was gone. Suddenly the fretful jarring at the stern of the steamer announced that we were coming to a stop. A splash at the prow with the long cable rumbling through the ship's nose, declared us at anchor.

I ran on deck. Already we were being surrounded by Korean boats, and half naked men were climbing over the ship's side. Japanese sailors were

trying to beat them back with club and fist, but on they came with bruised heads and backs, yet without retaliation. All for the privilege of carrying a passenger with his bundle to the landing. With the brawn of the ox and the courage of heroes, these despised and oppressed men of the sea fought for their livelihood. Such fearless resolve would be terrible if organized under arms, I reflected.

A half hour later Tong-siki came to me carrying in his hand a huge, red visiting card from the Superintendent of Trade and a note containing a polite, urgent request that he would accompany the bearer home; also saying that he regretted exceedingly that duties compelled him to remain on shore, denying him the pleasure of an earlier personal greeting.

The passengers were rapidly leaving the ship. Bidding the bearer of the letter to wait, Tong-siki led the way to his cabin, and having carefully closed the door, he took off his underjacket, and asked me to exchange mine for his. Wondering, I exchanged him my coarse one for his, which was made of the finest silk.

"Keep the jacket," said he. "Do not part with it for a moment, wear it night and day. If at any time I should send for you, either in the port or at the capital, come to me immediately, and do not hesitate to promise any amount of money that may be demanded for such a privilege."

I promised.

"We shall separate at the landing. It will be better that you seem to have no connection with me," said he. "You are without money," he added, pressing a small roll of bills in my hand. Then he told me where I should wait in Seoul, and not leave the place till he should either join me, or send for me.

"Buy a better coat," he added, looking me over; "you will need to look well to be of service to me."

Then, following a habit of his which I have never seen in anyone else, he put both hands on my shoulders and looked long in my face and smiled happily, and when I looked the misery and fear that I felt, he laughed heartily.

"Tong-siki, don't do it," I urged, desperately.

"Too late to turn back now," he said "even if I should desire to do so. At least a half dozen pairs of eyes watched us enter this cabin; and then, too, you have forgotten the kind invitation from the Superintendent of Trade. Of course I will accept it. I suppose I might put up with my friends, the Japanese, but that would only delay the issue."

He looked in my face steadily, with the hunger of a great soul in his eyes, then said:

"If I fall, Sung-yo, will you take my place?"

I promised.

CHAPTER XXVI

For His Country

I had been eight days at the inn designated by Tong-siki, waiting for news from him. Rumor had it that he had been arrested and condemned to death, and that the Japanese officials had protested against his execution without a trial and that their request, which amounted to a demand, had been complied with.

Tong-siki's silence, however, seemed the confirmation of my worst fears. Supposing, I argued, that his Majesty had sent down an order for an impartial trial, no one could be sure that the order would reach the Department of Justice before the deed would be carried out. I remembered occasions when actions of that Department dragged through years, delaying cases of moment to the national interest, till, through utter weariness, the country turned its thoughts to other things; yet others, where personal interests were at stake, were disposed of with an alacrity that would have astonished the law courts anywhere else in the world, and I grew despondent when I reflected that fierce, personal jealousy and hatred were the chief factors to determine the fate of my friend.

All that last day of waiting and watching, the wind blew heavily up the streets, lifting clouds of dust and driving them into the shops and inns, blinding one and piling up little heaps around the cracks of the doors and on the window sills. Strings of pack-ponies clattered by, their riders ducking their heads and bracing against the wind. The heat was oppressive, and when one attempted to slack one's thirst, the taste of dust and sand was left in one's mouth. The weather irritated one, something finer than dust permeated the atmosphere, tingling and jingling one's nerves. Loose paper on the walls and windows buzzed and whistled wearisomely, while around the corners of the buildings the wind jostled, tugged, and roared, and as it swept down the mountainside over the city, wailed and whined grievously.

A school building adjoining the inn, where a score of boys had daily bellowed out their lessons, was on that day silent, save now and then an uproarious spurt of noise which died away as suddenly as it began. Passing guests stopped long enough to order their meals, and eating in silence hastened on into the driving dust. When night fell the wind still howled and bellowed about the streets.

I lay down for the night more depressed than I had ever before been, and imagination involuntarily conjured up gruesome scenes, and in them was always the face of Tong-siki. Had not he trusted my

fidelity to his wishes, I should have rushed out on the streets and away from the city to shake off the dismal depression of mind. Thus I lay awake feeling, rather than hearing, the wind without, till about midnight when a fresh rattling of the door that opened on the street, seemed to have a personality about it, lifting it out of the general hubbub. I listened, and when it was repeated, went to the door and opened it. A gust of dust-laden wind flung in at the candle till its flame narrowed down to a tiny point of light, and for a minute I could see nothing without. Then its rays flared up and fell on a dark figure of a uniformed policeman.

He silently handed me a card on which was neatly written the name of Tong-siki.

"Where?" I asked.

"The Supreme Court Prison," he replied.

A moment later, I was at the man's heels. He led me through portions of the city that I had not visited before. He carried no light, and it was evident that he did not want to be seen. When we entered the main streets, I noticed that the storm had put out most of the lights. Occasionally we overtook watchmen, to whose greetings my guide scarcely grunted a response. We paused at the entrance of a large dismal looking building and my guide knocked. The door opened from within with a loud squeak, and I found myself half-blinded by a dozen lanterns in the hands of gatekeepers, messengers, and others.

My guide did not pause, but led me to a room near the entrance, and without ceremony opened the door and motioned me to enter, then closed it after me.

A man sat on a cushion in the middle of the room. At his side was a small table, on which lay paper, brush, and ink, suggesting that he had been writing. He glanced up, then folded a piece of paper and very deliberately put it in an envelope before taking further notice of me.

"Want something?" he said at last.

I told him my name, and he made the usual formal replies with frigid gravity. I waited for him to speak to unravel the mystery of Tong-siki's card. With an imperturbable face, he turned to his paper a moment, then glanced at me, his face an interrogation. I knew that he had sent for me, and that no one, without his consent, could have gained entrance to the prison yard that night, and all my senses were awake to see what move he was planning.

"Your man brought this," I said, handing him Tong-siki's card. He took it and laid it on the table.

"A friend of Tong-Siki's—and want to see him, do you?" he said.

"Yes."

"Can't be done, impossible," said he, with unnecessary vehemence. "His Majesty has ordered the arch traitor executed. It is to take place to-morrow at daylight," and he rolled the words and hugged the sounds as if they gave him inward delight.

"He is in the death cell now," he continued, "to open it would invite investigations. You people of the common herd, who associate with traitors and anarchists, should be with him. Do you think I would let you in that cell to-night? You showed the usual wit of your class in coming here. We, who have the arduous duty of protecting his Majesty, and devote ourselves unceasingly to the safety of the royal family, whose only thought of reward is the consciousness of having done our duty, have many ways of securing traitors and their accomplices. Sometimes it is the handcuff, while at other times a visiting card will do the work;" he said, looking fiercely at me from under his broad hat rim. Returning the look with calm indifference, I said:

"So you sent the prisoner's card to lure me here for imprisonment, to suffer under the charge of abetting a crime?"

"Judge for yourself, are you not here?" he replied, hotly, noticing the scorn in my voice.

"It is a lie," I said, without heat.

He looked at me a moment, as if his ears had deceived him, then I repeated:

"It is a lie."

He sprang to his feet and called at the top of his voice, panting with excitement. A prolonged "Ya-a-a" came in response. A dozen feet were at the door, and it was flung open with a fierce jar. For a full minute the man hesitated, then motioned his

minions away and sitting down, looked at me steadily.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"You, yourself, have said that I was a friend of Tong-siki's," I said recklessly. "You sent me his card at his request with the hopes of obtaining money from me."

"Hopes!" he echoed.

"Your threat to imprison me does not frighten me at all, though I doubt not it would satisfy your spleen, but I have more confidence in the strength of your greed. If it is money that you want, now that we understand each other, name your price."

"Who are you?" he again asked.

"Whoever I am disposed to represent myself for the present, your description of me is satisfactory. I am Tong-siki's friend."

He looked at my sunburnt skin and heavy hands and seemed puzzled.

"Of course," I said, "if you have nothing further to say I may as well go, inasmuch as I did not seek your presence."

"You understand little my responsibilities. Loyalty to the authority that is over me is the first principle of my life. You must know that to open a prison door is to run incalculable risks. What interest have I in a traitor? Why should I run the risk of my life for him? If you have money to pay the price of a man's life, you might possibly see him."

"At how much do you value yourself?" I asked with a sinking heart, remembering that I had not money to pay heavily, and I knew that Tong-siki had been robbed of everything that he may have had with him.

"You will lay twenty thousand yang on this table," said he, "for a half hour in that prison."

I looked down to hide the dismay that I felt. It would take months for me to visit my old home and raise that enormous sum of money.

"A huge sum for a short visit," I said, in the effort to gain time."

"I have no more to say," he replied, with impatience.

"When?" I asked.

"On this table within an hour," said he, tapping the table with menacing irritation.

"Show me the prisoner," I replied in blind faith, remembering Tong-siki's words: "Pay any amount that may be demanded for the privilege of coming to me."

"There are empty cells with stocks, and racks, and all the machinery necessary to wring gold from any lump of clay, and you may refuse to pay if you want to," he said, with a look of sinister resolve.

I nodded in reply to the threat, and without another word he stepped into the yard, and I followed. He led the way to a heavily barred door and an attendant unlocking it, swung it open for me to enter,

then closed and locked it after me. Immediately I heard the tramp of the guard at the door, and a second tramping up and down in front of the building.

Inside the prison was absolutely dark, and I stood at the door with a chill of apprehension, much wondering if I had been indeed trapped. I struck a match and held it above my head. The room was small with a clay floor and walls heavily planked on the inside. It was close and suffocating from the heat and lack of ventilation. The match burned dimly in the thick atmosphere and revealed the dense darkness of the place.

"Peace to you," came a cheerful voice from the shadows, and my heart leaped at the dear, familiar sound.

The match flickered and went out, but I found my way across the room where sat Tong-siki, his legs extended and his feet in stocks. He did not chide me for tears, but comforted me, as if I were the one waiting death in the noisome prison, and he the one who had come to me. In the dark, I ran my hands down to his feet and strained at the timbers that held him, and he laughed.

"A light, Sung-yo—the lamp is beyond my reach," he said.

I lit a tiny lamp hanging from the roof, and kneeling down looked him over. He bore marks of suffering, yet his eye and voice spoke in the old, happy way.

"So you had faith in me to do blindly what I asked. It is worth one's life to feel that there is even one person who trusts one implicitly." He looked his gratitude, and reaching under the jacket that I had worn from the moment we had made the exchange on the steamer, fumbled with the seam of the lining for a moment, then ripped it from its place.

"There," said he; "see what you have, but don't turn into the light. These walls have eyes as well as ears."

From the lining I removed six one hundred yen notes.

"That is all," said he; "will it do?"

"One to spare," I replied.

"In the other side are papers, but no money. They are addressed to different persons, and they contain matter with which I want you to become familiar. It will require money to carry on the campaign plans that have taken me, in counsel with others, years to materialize. They are all explained among these papers. Guard them, with the names of the persons found there, with your life. You will not be searched here. I took care of that before sending for you. You have paid a price that protects you to this extent. Money on the one hand, and fear from being haunted on the other, will work wonders. Greed and fear are the two great mastersprings of most people's actions."

Then he told me how he had attempted to com-

municate direct with his Majesty, to warn him of the calamity that threatened the country from aggressive foreign nations; how, in failing, he had stood before the Prime Minister and had pleaded for Korea, as a man pleads for his life; how he had urged reforms, and for a brief period had divided the councils of the nation; how, for fear of the influence of so masterful a person, they had united in ordering his death.

When Tong-siki had told of his failure, he dropped his head on his bosom, and for the first time during the years that I had known him, tears trickled down his face. "What do I see, Sung-yo? —I see a great war and Korea lying between the terrible armies crushed and bleeding. A foreign power ruling our people, harnessing our rivers for their own peoples, hewing down the mountains for their own wealth, spanning the country with their roads, the whirr of the factories and thunder of the locomotive under strangers' hands, and our people their slaves—and pitifully poor."

The next instant his cheerfulness had returned.

"This is not loss. It is gain. I am simply a stepping stone to better conditions. They are fools enough to think, that in killing one, they kill the cause for which we stand."

"No hope for escape, Tong-siki?" I asked again, foolishly struggling at the heavy beams that held him down.

"I escape at daylight. Tell the people, Sung-yo, that I die for them. Tell all that love liberty, that it is better to die for it than to live in luxury without it. The price of liberty the world over is the blood of its devotees, and I gladly give my life for it." He paused a moment and said:

"You remember the Christian chapel that we visited on our way home after the battle of Pyeng-Yang, and how joyous the people seemed? I found out the reason of their joy. Your Ewa learned the same lessons, and I shall see her, Sung-yo.

"Years ago, I laid my little three-year-old boy in the dust, and during all these years his prattle has been in my ears, and his little hand has clung to my fingers. During these years of separation, he has grown in wisdom and knowledge. In his natural development, untrammeled by the limitations of sinful flesh, he has sped on and outstripped his halting, staggering father, and somewhere—up there—he has touched the border line of the angels, and on the morrow when the shock of the executioner has hurled me across life's boundary, speeding down the shining way to meet me, I shall see him and shall delightedly put my heavy fingers in his tiny hand, and he will lead me up to the Master, and he will show me the wonders of that wonderful land. Don't think, Sung-yo, that I shall be afraid. He who was born of woman will understand."

A jarring of the heavy door, as the fastenings were being pulled down, announced that I had stayed out my time. I flung my arms around Tong-siki. "Don't cry," he said, in his old hearty way. "This is not defeat; it is victory." Then he pulled me down in front of him, and looked in my eyes and smiled.

The next moment the keeper was inside searching their prisoner carefully to see that I had left nothing with him to help him free himself, or take his own life, or as a telltale of a midnight visit.

I was led out, and sat some time in the keeper's room, lost in my own grief and misery, till he reminded me of my contract; I laid on the table in front of him five hundred Japanese yen.

He took them up and examined each crisp note carefully.

Then I noticed for the first time, that I had seen him before, when, like a flash, I again saw the encounter with Tong-siki on the streets years ago, in the city of the north, and I wondered at the monster who had followed his victim to the prison cell, assuming the role of prison-keeper that he might gloat over Tong-siki's ruin. A feeling of loathing filled my soul, and when he fumbled as if searching to make proper change, I waved his hand aside and sought the door to get from his presence. As he opened the door for me, he smiled at the money in his hand. Standing on the outside, I said:

"Twenty-five yen for the body outside the city gate."

"Fifty," said he; "and pay on delivery."

I nodded—fearing to speak lest I should do him violence, and the prison-yard gate closed behind me.

It was still dark when I reached my inn, and never before did the moments of darkness seem so precious.

I walked out through the small city gate leading to the general burying fields, covered with a multitude of mounds, where my late contract would be fulfilled. As the darkness deepened, just before dawn, a great horror filled my soul. The dust storm had spent itself, but my throat ached as if parched with thirst and coated with dust. When the dawn shot a line across the sky, I retreated, and hid under the stone arch of the gate. Light looked in at me and mocked me. The sun rose and shot his shafts into my hiding place. Morning life around the gate of the great city moved, and throbbed, laughed, sang, and chattered and held disputes.

"Who are these for whom he has given his life," I thought; "these, who neither care nor know?"

At mid-forenoon, two men staggered through the gate with a burden between them rolled in a mat. They followed me out across the hills, and when they had finally laid their burden down, I sent them back to the city for proper means to bury the patriotic dead.

Lost in my bitter grief, I sat at a distance from the shapeless bundle, surrounded by the mounds of the dead. There was no one moving in the vicinity, but the old life crowded the distant gates of the city and fretted itself with its petty, sordid interests, unmoved by the tragedy of a life given for it. I turned my face to the bundle which lay some yards away—a breeze lifted a corner of the mat and seemed to stir it the whole length. The motion resembled so exactly that caused by a hand tugging at the bundle that my eyes became glued to it.

"Ah, Tong-siki," I thought, "our land was poor before, but to-day gaunt hunger stares across every threshhold in the land. The people thought that they were robbed before, but to-day every home has lost father, son, or brother."

A stir about the matting brought me to my feet in foolish superstitious fear, and my legs shook under me. Then, like a flood of light, hope filled my soul—and I ran to the bundle of matting and feverishly tore at its fastenings. A hand slipped out into view with the color of life upon it. My knife slid down the matting and Tong-siki sat up, his eyes blinking in the rays of the bright sunlight.

"Well," said he; "that was a rough ride. I thought they would never get here."

Before Tong-siki spoke, I had been pulling at his shoulder, twisting this way and that, with no thought of what I was doing. At the sound of his

voice, I came to my senses. "Why, Tong-siki! didn't they hang you?" I said, my face close to his.

"Are you sorry?" he replied, his old smile returning. "Hang me! I should think they did! They thought they had done it. Cowards and assassins do their work ill. Fear of the Emperor's orders must have cut the operation short. When I came to myself, I was being jogged along in that roll of matting. Ugh! it was hard work to breathe in there, and harder still to lie quiet until they laid me down. Our barbarous method of burying criminals saved my life; a coffin would have smothered me. I had a ghostly scheme for the purpose of sending my kindly disposed bearers in panic from the field, but I heard all you said, and knew that you were left alone. I hoped, though, it seems vainly, that your love for me would prompt a last glance at my face." He paused, and after a few moments of reflection, added: "Come, we must dig my grave."

No two men ever dug a grave with such delight. When the matting was covered and the mound rounded high, he looked down at the grave and soberly said: "Tong-siki is dead, but Sang-ho lives. Can you remember, Sung-yo? Sang-ho lives."

I nodded.

He turned and looked out over the city a long time; tears stood out on his cheeks, and he spoke as if echoing a great conviction:

"Korea shall be free—she will be made free."

An awed, bewildered feeling possessed me, and I gazed up into the face of this wonderful man, in whose heart there was no malice, nothing but tender solicitude; who had repeatedly out-maneuvered an army of bitter enemies, and defeated death, and his words fell on my ears like the words of a prophet arising from his own closed grave, and echoed in my soul an unalterable confidence—

"Korea shall be free—she shall be made free."

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